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New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I call first on His Excellency Mr. Peter David, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada.

Mr. David (Grenada): I am honoured, Sir, to add Grenada's voice to the many warm congratulations offered you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Grenada looks forward to working with you and pledges to support your leadership as you exercise impartial stewardship over this fine institution. Equally, we commend your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his dedication and conviction in pursuing the vision of the United Nations as a home for social justice for all, particularly those who carry the greatest burden.

Through you, Mr. President, Grenada wishes to highly commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his staff for their performance over the past year in advancing the work of this Organization and "delivering as one". We thank the Secretary-General for his interest and participation in the recently concluded Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Climate Change Summit, chaired by Grenada. We wish him and the Secretariat every continued success.

The challenges facing the global community are mirrored in our regional and national context. Fortunately, we have no better place than within these hallowed walls to continue the long and important journey of building a better world. We cannot respond to one challenge and choose to ignore another, because all of them are interconnected. Indeed, working together is our raison d'être — the essence of the "united" in the United Nations.

Climate change is rightfully described as the most urgent threat facing mankind, and, at least for the next several months, it will remain at the top of the global diplomatic and negotiating agenda. But what is the challenge of climate change if not a risk to development, security and peace? What is the threat of climate change, if not a threat to the very notion of human survival and ecological balance? For small States, this threat is particularly pronounced.

Today, I address this Assembly on the heels of two very important responses to climate change — the AOSIS Climate Change Summit and the Secretary-General's summit on climate change. What is clear from these very well attended global meetings is that for developing countries such as Grenada, the alarm has been sounded — the alarm that climate change is bearing down on our countries and undermining our potential for both economic recovery in the short term and economic growth in the longer term.

It is hampering our efforts to attain sustainable development, as set out in the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation. In the case of Grenada, this is due to our dependence on our natural resource base, which supports

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agriculture and tourism. Together, they account for more than 40 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP), and they are extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of storms, hurricanes and other economically disruptive events induced by climate change. Hurricane Ivan in 2004 brought home this reality, causing damage estimated to be equivalent to 204 per cent of GDP at the time. The country is still recovering from that event. Grenada is not unique among small island States around the world in experiencing those impacts.

The gap in terms of the experience of the reality of climate change between those Member States already impacted and all others needs to be urgently bridged. If we fail to do that, the United Nations itself will have to bear the consequences of the humanitarian and environmental crisis resulting from the fact that some islands will no longer be inhabitable.

When my Prime Minister, the Honourable Tillman Thomas, addressed the Secretary-General's summit on 22 September, he spoke on behalf of the most vulnerable States. For these 80 or more poor island and landlocked States, a rise in temperature of two degrees Celsius is unacceptable, for our safety and survival will most certainly be at risk. That is why we insist on a global commitment to ensuring an average temperature increase of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, accompanied by appropriate midterm targets of a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by more than 45 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020 and by more than 95 per cent by 2050. These reduction levels respond to our vulnerabilities, and surely, in a United Nations system to which we all belong, it is unthinkable that known threats will be allowed to turn into grave risks.

We must solve the climate change crisis and we must solve it now. Estimates place the cost of financing adaptation and mitigation at about 1 per cent of the industrialized world's GDP — that is a contribution of $10,000 for every million dollars of GDP. Given the moral principle of historical responsibility, this is affordable by any measure.

With the adoption of the AOSIS Climate Change Declaration, small island States have said we will not stand by and watch our islands sink, see our livelihoods disappear and witness our children made homeless due to the effects of human-induced climate change. We again call on the international community to stand in support of the most vulnerable, so as to ensure that the targets set forth in the AOSIS Climate Change Declaration are agreed to in Copenhagen. Grenada will continue to play its part in highlighting the needs of the most vulnerable while advocating for the strengthening of their capacity for resilience. While it continues to chair AOSIS, Grenada will always advocate for sustainable development goals as well as for agreements in the Copenhagen negotiations that are commensurate to the level of the threat.

The financial and economic crises continue to undermine economies worldwide. The green shoots of recovery need to blossom everywhere. Grenada continues to insist, as our Prime Minister Tillman Thomas stated at the June summit on the crisis, that the global financial and economic architecture needs fundamental and far-reaching reforms (see A/CONF.214/PV.1). Changes are needed in its rules, regulations and governance in order to facilitate the effective participation of small economies, which suffer the effects of the crises harder and longer. Here, we wish to echo the call for reform of the international financial institutions, particularly the call for a review of the policy conditions attached to lending by the International Monetary Fund.

Grenada continues to pursue sustainable economic development and prosperity for our people, as they show resilience to economic setbacks. A study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations shows that Latin America and the Caribbean was the most successful region before the surge in food prices in 2008. That affirms our efforts.

However, another study showed that in times of crisis, social spending does not favour the poor and development goals are stymied. This is our fear, and it is also our reality. That is why the Government introduced a package of measures, greatly supported by financing from the Trinidad and Tobago Petroleum Fund, which has begun to lay the basis for developing a low-carbon and rights-based economic development model. In this regard, we wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for its continued assistance to Grenada and to the Caribbean region through its contribution to this Fund. We are also grateful for the Petrocaribe agreement with the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, through which several Caribbean countries are able to purchase oil on softer terms.

Grenada has put in place strategic initiatives that include revitalizing the agricultural sector, increasing labour productivity, diversifying the export-services sector, strengthening the national investment environment and modernizing our tax system. In implementing those initiatives, we seek partnerships with the international community and the United Nations system.

Trade continues to be of major importance to Grenada. We are experiencing severe setbacks from the loss of preferential treatment in agricultural markets. We are among the smallest and most open markets in the world. And yet larger countries contest whatever benefits we receive to offset the disadvantages of our small economic size, which are compounded by high transportation cost and energy prices.

Grenada is pleased that the United Nations system continues to pursue economic growth and development. We support the perspective that any outcome in Copenhagen must be a development outcome, for each is connected to the other. We urge support for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. We have made progress by achieving 80 per cent primary school enrolment, by reducing violence against women and by scaling up access to antiretroviral drugs for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

All the same, Grenada is striving to achieve a faster rate of poverty eradication. That goal, however, is hampered by the drop in revenue caused by the economic downturn and by our heavy debt burden, which now stands at 107 per cent of GDP. That is why we add our voice to the call for a review of the criteria for determining middle-income status. For while we welcome efforts to assist highly indebted poor countries, States such as Grenada that are currently referred to as highly indebted middle-income countries deserve special attention.

The Government of Grenada favours peace and reconciliation, aspiring to bring people together to work for a common good. From that platform we pursue true partnership for development, beginning with the private sector, trade unions and civil society. Together, then, as one nation, we face the international community.

Development is important in its own right. It also serves as a guarantor for peace and security. We urge the United Nations to continue its efforts in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. My country continues to support those efforts in the Caribbean region, to which we have contributed a small number of officers.

We welcome the reopening of the office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Barbados to serve the eastern Caribbean region, and we highlight the need for more intervention to stop drug trafficking.

In our region, the proliferation of small arms is as lethal as nuclear weapons. So while we welcome the unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) on nuclear disarmament, shepherded by President Obama, we in the Caribbean call for an agreement on the small arms trade.

Grenada again calls the Assembly's attention to the need to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea. The States of the Caribbean Community and members of the Association of Caribbean States depend on the tremendous benefits from the pristine waters of the Caribbean Sea. Yet those ocean-based resources are threatened by the trans-shipment of nuclear and other hazardous waste materials through our waters. We look to the General Assembly to strengthen the resolution on this issue and to ensure that the threat is removed as soon as possible.

In what United States President Barack Obama calls the new era of engagement, we believe that we face three major undertakings. The first is to respond to whatever threatens us at a level commensurate to the threat; second, to strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations to enable it to respond; and third, the sacredness of this grand institution to inspire humanity.

In this endeavour, Grenada is guided by its national values, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its participation in the hemispheric system and the Caribbean regional integration process. Consequently, we reject the removal of the duly elected head of State in Honduras and call for the immediate restoration of President José Manuel Zelaya to the position to which he was legitimately elected.

The maintenance of the 40-year United States embargo against Cuba and the failure to bring into being a homeland and State for the Palestinian people, despite numerous United Nations resolutions on both issues, remain of deep concern, for they violate the spirit and letter of international law, on which this Organization is founded. We join the entire Caribbean community in calling for an end to the United States

embargo against Cuba and urge the normalization of relations between the two countries. We call for a sincere engagement to resolve the long-standing Palestinian-Israeli and wider Middle East conflict. Resolution of those entrenched conflicts will generate the momentum needed for resolving similar conflicts in other regions in Africa and elsewhere.

The United Nations plays a critical role in every facet of global affairs. That is its strength. To become more effective, the Organization must necessarily become stronger, and that is why the resolution on system-wide coherence is timely and has our support. Likewise, the reform of the Security Council must not be put off for another 16 years. Reform must mean greater democratization by removing the veto, enlarging permanent and non-permanent categories and making operating rules and procedures transparent.

Grenada is proud to continue playing its role at the United Nations. We support the pursuit of international peace and security, the rule of law and the fight against terrorism and for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human rights. We support the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Group of 77 and China. We support the just ambitions of Africa, and we proudly support the initiative of the Government of South Africa to mark and celebrate, across the globe, 18 July as Nelson Mandela Day, a day of selfless giving.

We welcome the United Nations support for the initiative to establish the permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: lest we forget. That memorial is addressed to all humanity so that we may draw the lessons of yesteryear for our empowerment. We thank all Member States which have already contributed, and we encourage others to support the Permanent Memorial Fund.

Grenada continues to value the role of the United Nations as the pre-eminent institution for effecting multilateral diplomacy. We support its ability to ensure international peace and stability and to accord a voice to all sovereign States, as enshrined in its Charter. We have made significant and meaningful progress in previous sessions of the General Assembly. Let this sixty-fourth session be another outstanding forward movement in meeting the most pressing global challenges of our time.

The President: I now call on The Honourable Samuel T. Abal, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Abal (Papua New Guinea): It is indeed my honour and privilege, Mr. President, to bring you, on behalf of the people and Government of Papua New Guinea, our warmest greetings and to pledge our support as you preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We thank your predecessor, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his strong leadership during his tenure as President of the Assembly at its sixty-third session.

We would like to reiterate our support for the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF for their efforts to enhance the benevolent work they do for the world and Papua New Guinea.

When God distributed the peoples of the world everywhere, he wedged in Papua New Guinea, a small country of 6.5 million people, between the South Pacific and the South-East Asia. It has been a privilege that has allowed us to appreciate the peaceful and colourful people of the Pacific as well as the dynamic nations of South-East Asia. We may not be a large country or a country of economic or military power, but in our own way and from our own standpoint, we have a right to contribute to the world among other nations, to collectively approach issues and problems and to speak out whether in support or in disagreement.

Very recently, on 16 September, we celebrated the thirty-fourth anniversary of our independence. But an important achievement for us was the fact that by the grace of God, we have had an unbroken constitutional democracy for those 34 years. Our current Prime Minister, the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, has been in Parliament for 41 years. He is the founding Prime Minister and has been ousted only through a parliamentary constitutional vote and has returned three times as Prime Minister, the current term being his fourth. I am mentioning this because Papua New Guinea is contributing to democracy in the world. Through its democratic form of government, in a nation of over 800 languages and cultures, a people of diversity can find a way towards harmony and political acceptance of one another.

We are proud of that achievement, but we are also mindful of the many critical challenges that lie ahead

of us as we develop and progress. Many are challenges that cannot be handled by one individual country — whether large or small — on its own. The United Nations must therefore continue to provide the global forum for all Member States, big and small, powerful and weak, to come together to address the many global issues and challenges we face collectively as a human family. And together we must confront, first, the continuing threats of climate change and global warming, the global food crisis now compounded by the global financial crisis, and the threats of diseases that know no borders, such as H1N1, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, et cetera. Secondly, we must achieve together the social agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Papua New Guinea firmly believes that strengthening international peace and security is fundamental and is a prerequisite to achieving human development, progress and prosperity. My country denounces weapons of mass destruction and is fully committed to the principles of a world free from weapons of mass terror. That is attested to by the fact that we are a State party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and also fully support the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

We are now working earnestly towards early ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We also look forward to contributing constructively to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Papua New Guinea therefore welcomes positive initiatives of the new United States Government and other like-minded countries to enhance the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and encourage disarmament.

A continuing major concern of Papua New Guinea is the increase in global conflicts heightened by the illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons, which continue to cause untold suffering to millions of people around the world. The people of Papua New Guinea are no exception. The global debate on small arms has focused on curbing their use. However, the supply side of weapons is never comprehensively discussed. We therefore support a proposed arms trade treaty, which is still in negotiations and which will deal with one of the key elements of the arms issue.

In Papua New Guinea we have seen the presence of small arms and light weapons threaten the stability of communities. My Government prioritized the need to comprehensively address this issue through commissioning the 2005 National Gun Summit Report, which will be implemented soon.

The various global crises of today have had a disproportionate negative impact on many developing countries. From falling commodity prices to increases in food and energy costs, the damages caused and the costs incurred to redress them have heavily impacted their development. The impact of the crisis has also reduced levels of official development assistance globally and resulted in big shortfalls in the national budgets of developing countries.

While we appreciate that many countries have had to assist their economies by massive injections of capital, we nevertheless support the strong call for reforms of the international financial architecture to include major developing countries like China and India. Such reforms would better reflect today's global economic realities and provide effective management of the global process, which needs to be fair, equitable and transparent.

At the 2005 World Summit, leaders agreed to a set of broad reforms to the United Nations. Since then, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission have been established. Furthermore, the concept of the responsibility to protect has received broad support, with an inclusive process now under way to better elaborate it.

We support the continuing call for the reform of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories. In this regard, we support the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations within the General Assembly, which have seen the emergence of strong agreement on certain issues.

We note that great strides are being made in reforming the global gender architecture. We applaud the strong but cautious consensus reached at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly to support the creation of an Under-Secretary-General post to assist in better management of the various United Nations entities dealing with the gender issues. We take note of and commend the work of former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Her Excellency Helen Clark, as the UNDP Administrator. We therefore strongly support the ongoing reform, as the gender issue in its entirety

remains one of the key policy issues of my Government.

As a growing democracy in the Pacific, it is my Government's desire to see our friends and neighbours in the Pacific and beyond enjoy freedom and prosperity. We reaffirm our continuing support for our Pacific neighbours in their development aspirations. We feel that on the issue of Fiji we need to continue dialogue and not to isolate them. We also support the main thrust of the Pacific Plan and encourage our Forum dialogue partners to assist with its ongoing implementation, as we believe it will catalyse the Pacific region's development.

The social sector of many of our developing countries suffers greatly, and the United Nations has quite rightly set the Millennium Development Goals. They provide us with one of the greatest opportunities to leverage our development process. We commend and strongly support the Secretary-General for his proposal to convene a high-level session on the MDGs in September 2010.

Achieving the MDGs remains an integral development priority of our Government. We are working to achieve the Goals in close cooperation with all stakeholders, including civil society and international development partners such as the United Nations and its agencies, the Commonwealth, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the South Pacific Community.

The MDGs have been incorporated into our Medium-Term Development Strategy, which focuses on 15 national targets and 67 indicators under the National Road Map. They are specifically designed for Papua New Guinea to reflect the nation's stage of development. MDG 8 is ongoing through international cooperation with bilateral and multilateral development partners.

The Joint MDGs Project was launched in August 2008 and comprises the National MDGs Steering Committee, made up of representatives of the Government, the United Nations, academia and civil society. The Project is mandated to build national awareness and facilitate a strong data collection and analysis regime in the country. The Project also serves as a constituency for the Medium-Term Development Strategy and the MDGs.

The Government has localized the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by reaffirming its principles in the Kavieng Declaration to foster collaborative commitments with our development partners in pursuing the achievement of the MDGs. Our long-term aim is to grow our economy to such a level as to allow us to exit from our dependency on aid. We want to be economically independent; we choose not to be aid-dependent forever. We want to give aid and not receive it. Our aim is also to assist others from the richness of God's blessings on us.

The Government recognizes that greater and sustained commitment to implement policies at all levels is needed to achieve the MDGs. That commitment will also be supported by ongoing public sector reforms, especially in relation to delivery of basic services to our rural majority.

For the MDGs to be achieved, strong and viable partnerships must exist.

MDG 8 is critical to the achievement of the other seven Goals. However, all our partnerships must be underpinned by mutual respect between the partners and the Government. Some of our key partners include Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan, China, the United States, Italy and Austria, along with many non-governmental organizations, such as the Clinton Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which continue to strongly contribute to Papua New Guinea's development.

Climate change has emerged as one of the greatest crises now facing humanity. The consequences appear dire, and they are truly global. Such a global challenge can only be met by a concerted global response.

In Papua New Guinea today, we see evidence of climate change in the inundation of coastal areas, an increase in malaria due to warming in the highlands region of the country, and especially in the plight of the people of the Carteret Islands, where sea level has risen and some 1,200 people have had to be resettled.

We therefore strongly support the recent Alliance of Small Island States declaration on climate change. For many small island States to survive, we must strive to roll back atmospheric carbon concentrations to less than 350 parts per million and limit temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Therefore, emissions of greenhouse gases must peak by 2015 and be followed

by reductions of 45 per cent by 2020 and 90 per cent before 2050. Further, we will require healthy and expanded forest cover and widely available low carbon technologies, including carbon capture and storage.

In this context, the importance and urgency of extensive action on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) can hardly be overstated, and many delegations have spoken on it. Deforestation continues at an alarming pace, with around 13 million hectares of the world's forests being lost annually — an area the size of Denmark, Norway and Belgium combined.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that deforestation and degradation in developing countries may contribute to approximately 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans, while also representing around 30 per cent of the total cost-effective mitigation potential in the period up to 2020. Any solution to the problem should thus attract 20 per cent of any financial or institutional response.

It is worth stressing that, without rapid and significant reductions in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, added to deep emissions reductions by rich countries, it may be impossible to avoid global warming levels that will prove catastrophic for many vulnerable nations. Without question, immediate action on REDD+ is a crucial part of the climate change solution. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we will therefore require strong institutional frameworks for REDD+, including accommodating different national circumstances and providing for resource mobilization.

We also recognize the excellent work and analysis under way via the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD. This work estimates that, if a total of €15 to €25 billion were provided to catalyse early action from 2010 to 2015, then a 25 per cent reduction in annual global deforestation rates may be achieved by around 2015.

Deforestation and degradation in developing countries are the results of the stark economic need for local communities to survive that propels the destruction of forests. How do we keep the trees standing to sequester carbon?

There is hope. Significantly, early actions for REDD+ can be achieved at a reasonable cost, while protecting the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities, protecting biodiversity, rainfall patterns and soil quality, and helping countries to adapt to climate change. To succeed, a REDD+ mechanism should accommodate countries at different levels of development through a phased approach. The agreement should be results-based and incentives-driven. To achieve that, it must include both a reliable framework for monitoring, reporting and verification, and encourage a predictable and sustainable system for financing.

We must succeed in Copenhagen. If we are to succeed, rich countries must come forward and take the lead. Without their collective leadership on emissions reductions, finance and technology, the Governments of developing countries will not be able to make a compelling case at home to get people to allow trees to be left standing. As a result, 20 per cent of carbon emissions will continue to flow into the atmosphere. Therefore, let me be candid. Without a transformative grand financial bargain in Copenhagen that involves all nations, there could be no deal.

Let me conclude by repeating that the United Nations is the forum for agreeing on solutions for problems and challenges. In times of global crises such as climate change, financial meltdown and social sector vulnerabilities, there is also opportunity. Indeed, there is opportunity here, if we remember that MDG 8 allows us to leverage the greatest asset we have: strong partnerships between nations, both rich and poor.

More than ever before, we need the political will of the leading developed and developing countries, for the sake of the children of the world and for generations after them. I ask the General Assembly to please consider this and make a stroke for history.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Samuel Santos López, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mr. Santos López (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thirty years after the triumph of the people's Sandinista Revolution and the start of a process of popular and participatory democracy, on behalf of the President of Nicaragua and Commander of the Revolution, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, I salute and congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as

President of this Assembly, which it is my honour to address.

Nicaragua is a country impoverished by historical circumstances no different from, if not identical to, the histories and circumstances of countries of our Latin American and Caribbean region and others around the world. This history has been repeated over time and space, as we will outline later. Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains a land rich in beauty and natural resources. It is a nation symbolic of reconciliation and of national and international unity.

Although few may know this, our country is one of the safest countries of this continent. Nicaragua is engaged in an exemplary, tireless and decisive campaign against organized and petty crime in an exemplary fashion, as acknowledged by international bodies and authorities. It does so not only with coercive and punitive measures, but, more significantly, by building an alternative model of development that transforms the structures of poverty and marginalization that are the breeding ground of public security problems. Our model is based on democratic reform expressed by the people's will, which we call "citizen power".

By means of the "From Martí to Fidel" campaign, illiteracy has been reduced to 3.16 per cent. We have made progress in preventive medicine and have successfully controlled pandemics, such as that of the A (H1N1) virus. In our country, the mortality rate from this disease is one of the two lowest in America. These achievements have been made possible by the generous solidarity of the fraternal people and Government of Cuba, which has been consistent and has perpetuated the internationalist calling of Commander Fidel Castro Ruz.

The Government of Nicaragua has opened the door to production credits. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) selected our school nutrition programme as one of the top four in the world. In that spirit, President Daniel Ortega has proposed the adoption of a Central American agriculture policy to transform the region into a food production zone, and in that same spirit, we welcome and support the World Summit on Food Security scheduled for November of this year.

Today, we have an electrical power reserve of 42.6 per cent, although barely two years ago there was a shortfall of 3.29 per cent. This is thanks to the solidarity of the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela under the leadership of its President, Commander Hugo Chávez Frías. Meanwhile, we continue to make targeted efforts to promote the use of alternative renewable energy sources, such as water, wind, geothermal, solar power and, more recently, biomass. We also support initiatives aimed at developing civilian nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Clean drinking water has been made available to 217,000 families. We have launched programmes such as Zero Hunger and Zero Usury, which were highlighted in a report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food. In order to refute the daily lies of certain media outlets in Nicaragua, FAO recently issued a published notice of the positive results of the programmes it coordinates with the Nicaraguan Government to fight hunger and extreme poverty.

Food security cannot continue to be subject to the greediness of a few. There is enough food to nourish twice the current world population, but thousands die every minute around the world. While in some countries automobiles are fed, millions of boys and girls die with an empty stomach. That is simply criminal.

We also express our profound rejection of the discrimination and persecution of immigrants and unequivocally support full respect for their human rights. The Government of National Reconciliation and Unity also seeks to reverse the exclusion to which native peoples and communities of African descent have been subject throughout history.

Nicaragua is the enemy of terrorism in any of its forms, including State-sponsored terrorism. It is for that and many other reasons that we oppose the criminal embargo against the heroic people of Cuba, six generations of whom have been born since the embargo began. How many more generations must outlive it? How many more resolutions must the Assembly adopt on this topic? There are already 17 resolutions on this issue.

It is also rightfully of interest to this Assembly that, while a criminal murderer of Cuban athletes enjoys total liberty, five anti-terrorist Cubans are imprisoned far from their families and incommunicado for the sole crime of simply being anti-terrorists.

Today's Nicaragua is an active militant in favour of solidarity, as well as a militant supporter of gratitude. We therefore appreciate the disinterested cooperation of the sister nations that contribute to the economic and social development of our people. We also embrace the just cause of Puerto Rican independence and support the return of the Malvinas Islands to their rightful owner, the Argentine people. In the same manner, we endorse the struggles of the Saharan and Cypriot peoples.

We also call on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian territories. We stand unconditionally with the Palestinian people in their daily fight for their own sovereign State. That is why we advocate a peaceful, just and lasting solution that guarantees peace in that region. One year after gaining their independence, we congratulate the peoples of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and affirm that we have already established diplomatic relations with Abkhazia.

We support the new and positive focus that Taiwan has adopted in its relations with the People's Republic of China, as well as its participation in United Nations specialized bodies and agencies.

We condemn the coup d'état in Honduras and hereby proclaim our definitive decision not to recognize the results of any electoral farce in that country. By means of the coup, its perpetrators have sought to kill the democratic hopes and initiatives of the Honduran people, just as they sought to thwart the fraternal process of Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). Nonetheless, a change in Honduras that supersedes a formal and hypocritical democracy is inevitable.

From this rostrum, we denounce the massacre of the Honduran people and point in no uncertain terms to the assassination plot against President Zalaya. We must heed this now, because later it will be said that he committed suicide. From this very moment, we unconditionally support and endorse the proposal made last night in this same forum by the Foreign Minister of Honduras, Patricia Rodas, to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

The time has come to make the General Assembly a forum in which substantive, irreversible decisions are taken. We cannot continue to have a Security Council with an abusive veto privilege.

The time has also come for cooperation without humiliating preconditions, the construction of the most beautiful dream of Bolivar and Sandino, and the dawn of a realistic and coherent solidarity. I speak of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, composed of the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela, and Honduras in its resistance. ALBA is the basis for cross-cutting and inclusive cooperation between our peoples. Its membership increases day by day.

I cannot fail to note with profound concern that we are meeting today under economic circumstances that are similar to or worse than those of a year ago, when the worst world economic depression of modern times arose to exacerbate the existing food, energy and environmental crises. Unfortunately, these world crises have met with a decrease in official development assistance, which remains conditional thanks to the international financial institutions, and with the reluctance of developed countries to replace the current model with one that is more just and respectful of Mother Nature.

The United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development demonstrated that the Group of 192, as it has been called by my brother, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, has a voice in world economic matters. It is within the most representative institution that economic policies affecting millions should be decided, and not within exclusive groups, such as the Group of Eight or the Group of 20, defenders of the model of domination by the few over the majority. In that regard, we welcome establishment of the ad hoc open-ended working group that will follow up on the outcome of the Conference.

For some years now, climate change has become not a threat of the future, but rather a very present threat. We believe that the United Nations Climate Change Conference, to take place in December in Copenhagen, should be a debate not on the need to act, but rather on the need for the developed countries to fulfil their historic obligation under the Kyoto Protocol and to end their attempts to repudiate the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

It is time for attitudes and actions to reflect a true commitment to counteracting the harmful effects of global warming. We firmly believe that it is the

exclusive responsibility of the General Assembly — and in no case of the Security Council — to seek the consensus and commitments necessary for us to move forward in this struggle, which is a struggle for the survival of all humankind.

It is not possible to democratize selfishness, exclusion or the manipulation of truth. It is not possible to put a kind face on perversion or arrogance. That is the essence of the prevailing economic system — the exploitation of one human being by another, the subjugation of nations, and the hoarding of wealth by the few.

This is why we are in crisis; it is not because of a lack of resources, but because of the concentration of resources in the hands of a few, because of disregard for our environment, because of the rejection of moral values, because of human arrogance towards other species and, worst of all, because of disdain for human life itself.

We are optimistic. It is necessary to replace and find alternatives to the current socio-economic and political model, which has led to unjustified interventions such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to that now being committed against our region with the establishment of military bases in Colombia under the pretext of fighting drug trafficking.

We cannot fail to be struck by the fact that, despite the $7,558,000,000 invested, the flow of drugs out of Colombia continues to grow. In 1999, at the beginning of Plan Colombia, the drug traffic to the United States and Europe was an annual 600 metric tons. Today, in 2009, that traffic has more than doubled to 1,450 metric tons. In other words, the strategy of militarizing Colombia has failed, absolute proof of which are the numbers I have cited. The true objective of installing these "seven daggers in the heart of America", as they are called by Commander Fidel Castro, is to salvage the moribund economic and political system with which capitalism flaunts its power by controlling the hemisphere's water, oil and biodiversity.

We believe in the strengthening of energetic and progressive positions in the defence of peace and respect for the sovereignty of the countries of our region. We are sure that it will ultimately serve to further advance the Latin American unity dreamt by Bolívar, Morazán, Martí and Sandino.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Today, the solidarity practices of Fidel Castro and revolutionary Cuba have grown and spread like never before. The wide world of Latin America has ceased to be foreign, and as Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann said during his particularly outstanding presidency of the General Assembly, the current scenario is not a tragedy but a crisis. Crisis purifies. The pain we now feel is not the death rattle of a dying man but the pain of a new birth.

Finally, I wish to inform the General Assembly that Nicaragua, respectful of international law, has abided by the ruling of the International Court of Justice in its decision of 13 July 2009, and has issued a presidential decree to regulate navigation in the San Juan River, over which Nicaragua has full, absolute and unquestionable sovereignty, as was recognized by the ruling.

I send greetings to all on behalf of our President, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, and of all Nicaraguans who sing in praise of Darío and who proudly carry on Sandino's legacy in order to defend ourselves today with peace and dignity. Nicaragua is proud of its devotion to peace, honour, solidarity and the relentless struggle against injustice.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mr. Støre (Norway): In recent weeks, we have witnessed a resurrection of the authority of this Assembly and a new commitment to multilateral cooperation and a belief that it can and must be made to work. The new tone of voice we have heard from the United States here in New York is setting forceful persuasion above persuasive force and extending a hand to those who are willing to unclench a fist.

We must all seize this moment. Every country — including the smallest and weakest — can make a difference. Building bridges means that we must all reach out from where we stand today as we struggle together with the crises in finance, food, energy, climate and health. New efforts must be undertaken to break cycles of impasse, including moving decisively towards peace in the Middle East and a peace agreement that can deliver a Palestinian State living in peace side by side with Israel.

Last month, the Secretary-General visited Norway's Arctic to study the effects of global warming. As we approach the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, the pace of negotiations must accelerate. Economy-wide reduction targets must be set for all developed countries. Large and more advanced developing countries should commit themselves to measurable, reportable and verifiable actions. Cuts in emissions from rainforest preservation must be institutionalized — as stipulated under the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries — funded and included in the new treaty.

Financing is key to success in Copenhagen. Our Norwegian contributions and proposals may generate substantial new and additional financing for measures in developing countries, based on public finance and dedicated income from the carbon market.

The financial crisis has pushed millions of people back into the trenches of poverty and made us stumble in our pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. Loss of income is placing public policies at perilous risk, potentially undermining services on which the poorest and weakest depend the most, such as health and education services. Norway supports all the Millennium Development Goals. We will, for the second year in a row, surpass the 1-per cent mark in official development assistance (ODA). After the financial crisis hit us, we increased our ODA in absolute terms to show solidarity with those who are less fortunate than we are.

We focus our action on particular areas where Norway can make a difference. We will continue to take on a special obligation with regard to the health-related Millennium Development Goals. We have tripled our contributions to health care since the year 2000. Millions of lives have been saved through the efforts of a broad alliance of partners, private and public alike. We will continue to play a leading role until we have achieved those Millennium Development Goals.

The most disgraceful underachievement of the effort towards the Millennium Development Goals is the lack of progress to improve maternal health. While we can vaccinate children and give mothers a bed net under a tree at a particular time, what women need are round-the-clock services in clinics to ensure safe deliveries, as well as preparedness for transfer to a hospital in the event of complications. Strengthening health services is key to reducing maternal and child mortality and is also a vital element in guaranteeing the rights of women and children. New and dedicated efforts to combat maternal mortality will now be mobilized.

The appalling rise of rape and other forms of sexual violence reveals an ugly story of men around the world still regarding women and children as secondary citizens. We must never rest as long as women are denied the services and rights that we men take for granted. Nothing less than our claim to civilization is at stake.

Today, as we speak, the Security Council is debating the situation in Afghanistan after the elections, as well as the need for a new Afghan Government to connect more strongly with its people, fight corruption and narcotics, empower State institutions and protect human rights, and in particular women's rights, so that the day may soon come when Afghans can take care of Afghanistan's security and when Afghan men and women can run a democratic Afghanistan.

We must continue to support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which has a mandate to coordinate international assistance with the Afghan Government. UNAMA requires additional resources, as well as a strong commitment on the part of all United Nations Member States to the coordination of efforts under Afghan leadership.

We stand on the threshold of a new era of nuclear disarmament. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next year must set a clear and specific agenda for the elimination of existing nuclear arsenals and for ensuring that nuclear technologies are only applied peacefully, to the benefit of mankind. Recent information casts new doubt about Iran's nuclear ambitions. Iran itself has the opportunity and responsibility to remove this doubt, and it is imperative that it do so.

Furthermore, while nuclear weapons pose a threat of mass destruction, actual destruction of mass proportions is caused every day by small arms, cluster munitions and landmines. Motivated by the unacceptable harm that these weapons cause to civilians, Norway is committed to humanitarian

disarmament. We urge all States to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to join intensifying efforts to control small arms and the arms trade.

Norway is honoured to have been elected a member of the Human Rights Council and will work with others to raise the credibility, effectiveness and visibility of that important body. Last week, Norway submitted to the Council its first report on the human rights situation in my country, taking a critical look at our own record and inviting constructive criticism. We encourage all States to submit to similar constructive criticism of their own records so that the review process becomes substantial and meaningful.

Here in New York, we welcome the decision to establish a new and enhanced gender entity and hope to see it operational as soon as possible. We will pursue the United Nations reform agenda and system-wide coherence, as well as the Delivering as One agenda. The United Nations should take pride in being subject to more public scrutiny; reform must be an ongoing effort. Only such an approach will allow us to keep lending the United Nations all the support this noble body deserves.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Wirajuda (Indonesia): We meet today while the world is in the grip of intertwined crises from which we must break free if we are to ensure our long-term survival. The most urgent of these is the economic and financial crisis. It has put scores of millions out of jobs, shut down tens of thousands of factories, and pushed more than 100 million people below the poverty line.

A few days ago, at the Group of Twenty (G-20) summit in Pittsburgh, the 20 largest economies of the world, both developed and developing, addressed this crisis by agreeing to reform the global financial architecture to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. No longer will we depend on just a few industrialized nations to solve the world's economic problems. The developing world is now part of the solution to those problems. Through the G-20, the voice of the developing world will be heard in international economic and financial decision-making.

Thus, we are building today a new and constructive power equation, increasing the sharing of responsibilities and contributions and widening participation in decision-making. This redistribution of power constitutes fundamental reform that should be replicated in other bodies, such as the Security Council. And no more will our economies be left to the mercy of the market. Financial institutions and instruments will have to be regulated and closely supervised. There will be close consultations and mutual assessments of national economic strategies in order to ensure coordination at the global level and to identify potential risks to financial stability.

For our part in Indonesia we are working hard in the G-20 to reform the mandate, mission and governance of the International Monetary Fund and our multilateral development banks. These banks must deliver accelerated and concessional financing without conditionalities to the low-income countries so as to cushion the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable and the poorest.

All of this has set refreshing precedents in terms of access to financial resources for developing countries and in terms of transparency, and most importantly, it reflects current global realities rather than the world of 60 years ago. As such, it represents a democratization of the global economy and the international financial architecture. It has also given us a remarkable insight: that it is not an array of disparate crises that is confronting us. We are actually in the grip of one systemic crisis. The economic and financial crisis, the challenge of climate change, the food security crisis and the energy security crisis are problems that fed on one another and thus grew to critical proportions. That reality materialized because the international community failed to form an effective global partnership to address the large bundle of challenges that have ultimately affected all humankind.

In that sense, the root cause of this overarching crisis is the failure to achieve multilateralism and forge a system of democratic governance at the global level. But we can rectify that failure through an all-encompassing reform of the relationships between nations in the world today.

In December in Copenhagen we can strive to reach a new consensus on climate change that is more effective in averting climate disaster by forging an equitable and transparent partnership between

developed and developing nations. As the host country to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, which adopted the Bali Road Map by consensus, Indonesia fervently desires that the Copenhagen meeting will yield a new commitment to a framework to strengthen the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. This framework must stipulate deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and sufficient financing for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

We would like to see the role of forests given the top priority that it deserves. We look forward to ocean issues being mainstreamed into the new climate regime. And we cannot allow the negotiation process to be derailed; the stakes are too high. We need not even wait for a consensus. We are ready to forge partnerships to carry out concrete projects like the Indonesia Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, which by itself is already a contribution to climate stability. In the same spirit, Indonesia is hosting the Forest-2011 ministerial meeting in Jakarta next month.

By the same token, we can launch a more successful and durable Green Revolution that is based on the same kind of partnership and gives developing countries sorely needed access to resources and technology. That partnership can and must provide for the massive investments required for agricultural production and building agricultural infrastructures. When sufficient investment is channelled to agriculture, the result is the productivity that Indonesia has enjoyed in the past several years. We have a surplus production of rice and part of that surplus will become a buffer stock for our national food security. Part of it will be allotted as our contribution to global food security.

Through similar reform we can involve more nations in a coordinated quest for new sources of renewable and clean energy, without compromising food security. A global partnership for energy security rather than a scattering of individual efforts will have a much better chance of achieving a technological breakthrough that will enormously increase the efficiency of current fuel-burning mechanisms.

With this new spirit of reform and multilateralism, we will be able in 2010 to break the impasse in the Doha Round negotiations, which will lead to an outcome that is pro-development. In that same spirit we can tear down the barriers of protectionism that are rising again out of fear of the economic crisis. With trade revitalized, world gross domestic product (GDP) could be bolstered by $700 billion a year.

A global partnership that reforms the international financial architecture, works for climate stability, food security and energy security and brings a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Round should also bring about the fulfilment of the Monterrey Consensus. This will ensure the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

If this new spirit of multilateralism and reform can pervade international socio-economic affairs, there is no reason why it should not also find its way into the politico-security field. It can resuscitate the disarmament agenda — especially nuclear disarmament, which has been lying moribund for decades. In a truly democratic world order, the nuclear Powers would fulfil their commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty by slashing their nuclear arsenals and abiding by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In turn, we non-nuclear countries will continue to refrain from developing nuclear weapons.

This is no longer an impossible dream. A window of opportunity has been opened with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) on the maintenance of international peace and security leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world, and with the current process between the United States and the Russian Federation towards deeper cuts in their respective nuclear arsenals. Thus, the disarmament agenda is being revived.

Even the persistent Middle East conflict, with the question of Palestine at its core, could be more expeditiously resolved, if the task of promoting the peace process involved a wider base of stakeholders. The main problem in reviving the peace process at the moment is the intransigence of Israel on the issue of illegal settlements. But the early engagement of the Obama Administration in the peace effort and its even-handed multilateral approach to the problem brings hope for an eventual two-State solution.

Let us therefore respond to President Obama's call for partnering for peace. Likewise, the challenge of terrorism demands the broadest possible coalition of nations to put an end to it — not only through sheer force of arms but also and mainly through a dialogue of faiths, cultures and civilizations that will put the merchants of hate out of business.

Every major problem in the world today calls for the concerted efforts of many nations to work out its solution. This includes transnational challenges like piracy, irregular migration, money-laundering, human rights violations, the threat of a pandemic and natural disasters. All these problems demand reform and strengthening of international cooperation. A clamour for reform that must be heeded now is the call for the overhaul of the composition and workings of the Security Council. For by no means does the Council reflect the realities of our time — it is a throwback to the world at the end of the Second World War.

In the same way that the Group of Eight can no longer solve the economic problems of the world, a Security Council paralysed by its undemocratic composition and the veto system can no longer guarantee our collective security. It needs to be more democratic, transparent and accountable. It needs new sources of strength that the developing world and their ancient civilizations can help provide in the same manner as the inclusivity of the G-20.

We in Indonesia are great believers in democratic reform, because that is what saved us from being totally crushed by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Over the years until then, we had focused too much on the market and on our GDP growth and thus neglected our political development. The only way out of the crisis was reform — reform of every aspect of our national life. And so we made the transition from a highly centralized authoritarian regime to a decentralized, more fully democratic system. We reformed our military, our bureaucracy and our justice system. We modernized our economic infrastructure.

And since October 2004, the administration of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has been consolidating and fine-tuning earlier reforms. Now, having won re-election in only the second direct presidential election in our history, he is ready to launch a second wave of reform, which will lay the foundations for Indonesia's becoming a developed country by 2025. Meanwhile, we have come to be known as the world's third largest democracy, the land where democracy, Islam and modernization not only go hand in hand but thrive together. We intend to keep on earning and deserving that recognition — by, among other ways, learning from others and sharing with them our experiences in political development.

That is why, last December, we organized the Bali Democracy Forum, Asia's first intergovernmental forum on democracy. We are making this an annual affair. And it is our hope that the world, as it reforms its economic governance, will learn a truth that we came upon during our crisis some 12 years ago: that prosperity without democracy is but a bubble. And democracy that does not deliver development will not endure. Economic and political development must march hand in hand. As it is with a country such as Indonesia, so it is with the world. It is not enough for the world to get its economics right. It must also get its politics right. For man does not live by bread alone. He must also have his freedom.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Roble Olhaye, chairman of the delegation of Djibouti.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I would like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. I also take this opportunity to place on record our sincere appreciation of Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his efforts and leadership during the sixty-third session. I wish as well to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization and for his tireless efforts and dedication in the cause of international peace and security.

The current financial and economic crisis affecting many countries around the globe, particularly in the West, has reached the shores of Africa. Originating in the West, the uncontrolled banking and mortgage crisis, arising from over-leveraged subprime lending schemes, burst into the open, destroying the liquidity and survivability of many institutions in the developed countries.

It was thought that, since Africa was not a player in this sector, its financial institutions and its economies would escape more or less unscathed. Such was not to be; African difficulties have been compounded. This crisis follows on the heels of the food and energy crises and the challenges posed by the impacts of climate change. The severity of the crisis on poor countries cannot be underestimated. Poor countries have no choice but to work hard to restore strong growth and recover lost ground in order to move towards internationally agreed development goals. In this respect, it must be emphasized that the global

crisis cannot be an excuse to avoid fulfilling existing international aid commitments. In addition to timely delivery, flexibility of resources and predictability, it is critical that the aid be effective. Developing countries need access to new funding, including credit and liquidity facilities, infrastructure investment and support for domestic financial systems.

Members of the General Assembly are by now aware of the tense standoff that prevails in the northern part of my country, following the unwarranted and deliberately provocative incursion and occupation by Eritrean forces of Djibouti's sovereign territory at the beginning of last year, 2008. This wholly reckless action by Eritrea, a neighbour, provoked a mutual military build-up, leading to serious clashes between the two forces. In particular, the clashes of 10 to 12 June 2008 resulted in many deaths, countless wounded and prisoners taken on both sides, and this merits a special note.

My country embarked upon a calm and prudent policy that deliberately allowed sufficient time for the possibility of comprehensive bilateral contacts at every level in order to resolve hostilities amicably and peacefully. Our efforts fell consistently on deaf ears, accompanied by rebuffs, blatant denials, and dismissive and condescending utterances. Regional organizations, heads of State and Government, and the United Nations have all attempted to initiate dialogue; these efforts have gone for naught with Eritrea, which, in its usual brazen manner, has gone so far as to deny even the existence of any tension in the area, despite the clear, far-reaching and unmistakable conclusions of the United Nations fact-finding mission. Indeed, the mission's report represents a damning indictment of the regime's deceptive and erratic behaviour.

The Security Council has consistently condemned Eritrea's forceful occupation of my country's territory, namely, Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, and in resolution 1862 (2009) of 14 January 2009, demanded, inter alia, that Eritrea withdraw its forces and all their military hardware to the status quo ante; acknowledge its border dispute with Djibouti; engage actively in dialogue to defuse the tension and in diplomatic efforts leading to a mutually acceptable settlement; and to abide by its obligations as a Member of the United Nations.

The resolution required Eritrea to comply immediately, and, in any case no later than five weeks after the resolution's adoption date of 14 January. Eritrea, however, rejected the resolution the next day. There the matter has essentially remained, in the light of the series of requests made by the Secretariat for more time to pursue contacts, particularly with the Eritrean authorities. As everyone now realizes, it is a futile exercise to seek a credible response from Eritrea, whose intentions have always been to procrastinate on various pretexts while firmly entrenching itself in the occupied territory.

As Djibouti has repeatedly stated, the occupied areas of Ras Doumeira hill, which overlooks the Bab-El-Mandeb strait, and Doumeira Island, which is in the same Red Sea area, are situated in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. The militarization of this key strategic maritime route does not augur well for peace in the region or for international shipping and investment.

The dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti must not be allowed to fester any longer. It must be resolved along the lines of Security Council resolution 1862 (2009) without further equivocation, confusion or deliberate procrastination. Inaction sets a dangerous precedent that others will surely follow in the future: deny and refuse to cooperate. The Council must not appear to be appeasing Eritrea indefinitely. It is a dangerous and an unpredictable regime that so far has not shown any respect for international norms and behaviour. The Council must act now, using all means at its disposal.

Once again, the situation in Somalia is tense, tenuous and unpredictable. Somalia's plight is sickening, hopeless and disgusting, to say the least. Here we have a transitional Government that enjoys the full backing of the international community. Yet paradoxically, that same entity is woefully lacking the money and manpower that would enable it to confront the deadly insurrection that has paralysed the whole country. Mogadishu, the capital, is essentially a war zone. Most of its civilian population has been displaced, having fled the never-ending anarchy, abuses, impunity and other egregious crimes against humanity. The collateral damage to the civilian population is horrendous — in short, unquantifiable. Coupled with that, the Somali people are facing an extreme drought that threatens a widespread food shortage and starvation, which would necessitate major international emergency food aid.

The presence of African Union peacekeepers has been a major factor in keeping the transitional Government in power, but they are continuously under attack, and the need for more troops, as well as for the training and equipping of sufficient Somali forces, cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, there is tremendous goodwill towards the current Transitional Federal Government, in particular towards Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the current President, who enjoys both trust and international credibility. Unfortunately, that has not been matched by a commensurate support in terms of resource flows consistent with the promises and pledges made to the Government. Resources make the difference in the outcome of hostilities.

All the same, life in Somalia goes on, and with resources that country would be able to start addressing the critical urgent problems and issues of security, governance and job creation. Addressing the terrible drought now battering the country and crippling its already low food stock is a top priority. We must all fulfil our obligations to enable the Government to function. No doubt that is a tall order, but that is what it takes and that is the challenge that we all have to confront.

We are well aware of the flow of arms, resources and foreign fighters into Somalia and of the threat that Al-Qaida might establish a beachhead there. One can say that the time has come for all well-meaning Somalis, as well as peoples and Governments of goodwill everywhere, to step forward in order to create a lasting and stable environment for the people of Somalia. We owe that to the people of Somalia.

The stage appears set for dramatic developments in the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, which is by far the longest occupation in modern times. As we all know, the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission investigating last winter's three-week war in Gaza has issued its report. While both the Israelis and the Palestinians were strongly criticized, the condemnation of Israel by a United Nations body was unprecedented, stating that the result was

> "a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability". (*A/HRC/12/48, para. 1893*)

The peace process is frozen and there is no hope in sight of jump-starting it soon, as the new Israeli Government is intent on pursuing its business-as-usual policy of more settlements and refusal to engage in a process that addresses the final status issues.

My country is keen to have peace and security soon restored in the northern part of the sisterly nation of Yemen, within the framework of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity.

One cannot fail to notice the number of countries that have raised the issue of the representation on and composition of the Security Council. It is undeniable that we are in a different world from that which existed in the aftermath of the Second World War. Given the critical need to have a global body capable of addressing, in some manner, the challenges of an evolving international landscape, the issue is of concern to many countries. For the United Nations to retain its credibility and authority, it must continue to be relevant. New norms have risen, while whole continents lack permanent representation, let alone the power of the veto.

Once again, it must be said that Africa, the continent with the largest number of countries, needs to have a permanent voice in the conduct of world affairs. We see no reason to change our position, which we noted in 2007, that Africa seeks no fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of a permanent member, including the right of the veto, in addition to five non-permanent seats. Of late, things have been changing for the better in much of Africa, but the current disastrous international economic crisis was not of our making, as is true for the fallout from global warming. They and other crises underscore the urgency of our meaningful involvement in the United Nations and in world affairs. Permanent seats and increased membership on the Security Council would be in keeping with those growing international demands.

Time and space do not allow us to consider in any depth a number of other critical issues confronting developing countries. There should be some mention, however, of the harm to countries' trade and development stemming from the protective tariffs of the industrialized West. The effort to provide subsidies for a few large farming operations, blocking competition from farmers of the developing world, only hurts the latter. Perhaps cotton is a good example.

There is also the stalemate in the Doha Round trade talks. Those discussions must reopen in earnest, with the commitment to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Lastly, we need to highlight the concern regarding the Millennium Development Goals and the likelihood that they will not be achieved by 2015 in most countries. In sum, that is tragic for so many lives. Efforts must therefore increase towards mitigating that trend.

In conclusion, I wish, on behalf of my Government and the people of Djibouti, to express our heartfelt sorrow and profound condolences to the bereaved families and to the Government and the people of the Philippines for the torrential rains and heavy flooding that caused havoc and unprecedented disruption of lives and destroyed infrastructure.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): Before beginning my statement, I would like to mention something that happened on our continent, in West Africa, yesterday. Indeed, tragic events occurred yesterday in a country in West Africa, of which Cape Verde is a part: soldiers once again fired on a crowd. As a neighbouring, friendly and long-standing partner country of Guinea, I wish, on behalf of my country, to express my deep sympathy and the unequivocal condemnation of an act that disgraces the entire continent. I am referring to a challenge to the brave people of Guinea and to the international community. I pay tribute to the numerous victims of this odious act, which threatens stability and peace in the entire subregion.

(*spoke in Portuguese; French text provided by the delegation*)

I am pleased to congratulate Ambassador Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I also congratulate his predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his involvement, dedication and courage, which left an important imprint on the work of the sixty-third session. To Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Cape Verde expresses its confidence that he will continue to further our aspirations and consolidate the foundations of this Organization he leads that is dedicated to the common good. We thank him for his detailed report on the work of the Organization (A/64/1).

Peace, security and development are public assets that are essential to the progress of humanity. However, they have never before been as threatened as they are today. Therefore, I would like to share with the Assembly some of my country's concerns in that context.

During the Assembly's sixty-second session, the Prime Minister of Cape Verde, Mr. José Maria Neves, said:

> "We are living at a time when problems and threats are of concern to all. They are not confined to a single State or region. Nor can there be local solutions to the global threats of our era." (*A/62/PV.11, p. 2*)

He was referring to terrorism, organized crime and human trafficking and to weapons and drugs that in certain instances threaten the foundations of the democratic rule of law. He said that these phenomena "corrupt values, compromise development and thwart the most legitimate expectations of peoples" who are exposed to them and that "Responses to these issues will be ineffective unless they are undertaken within a robust, balanced and fair multilateral perspective" (*ibid.*).

I quote these remarks by the head of Government of Cape Verde because they are quite current and because the themes they address have been the object of increasing attention by the international community.

Cape Verde and other West African States are facing organized crime, which has found fertile ground for its activities in our region because of our fragile economies, the vulnerability of our emerging democracies and, in general, our States' weak capacities to respond to this major threat. With the support of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the logistics capabilities of our partners, we, the States members of the Economic Community of West African States are pooling our capabilities to confront this tremendous challenge that has engulfed our subregion.

In Cape Verde we believe that a small country cannot allow itself to be poor, vulnerable and unstable all at once. We therefore seek to reinforce our advantages, reduce our weaknesses and diversify our partnerships, in addition to strengthening our relations

of solidarity for the benefit of peace, stability and progress in our subregion.

Therefore, at the October 2008 conference on drug trafficking in our region and at the April 2009 round table on Guinea-Bissau security sector reform, both held in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, we sought to define together the parameters of our actions in these areas. We will continue to pay special attention to this threat, as we are convinced that the zone of peace we are building in the South Atlantic must become a tangible reality if we wish to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and, in general, the life of peace and progress that we wish for all.

In this context in which States and democratic processes are threatened by exogenous elements, multilateralism appears as an indispensable shield and an essential resource. There is no doubt that this confluence of wills and means among the most diverse countries and the most widespread regions at the heart of the international community constitutes the path to follow, not only for strengthening cooperation among the entities of international life and for the timely resolution of differences in the framework of the principles and values of the United Nations, but also for the strengthening of international law, which is indispensable for strengthening peace and security in the world.

The United Nations, in this context, remains the central element of the collective conscience of the community of nations. Thus the revitalization of the United Nations system emerges as a necessity of our time, giving priority to the participation of all, to the detriment of unilateralism, strengthening efficiency for the benefit of common interests and seeking solutions that meet the aspirations of the most vulnerable and of present and future generations.

Cape Verde is contributing to that framework as one of the eight pilot countries testing the Delivering as One process on the ground, which is successfully under way as a unique programme with a unique budgeting plan, a single purpose and single leader. This process has had positive repercussions on cooperation between the Government and the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations working in Cape Verde, thus enhancing the coherence of this programme, reducing transaction and administrative costs and benefiting all.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, it is expected that the global gross domestic product will shrink by more than 2.5 per cent in 2009. The growth of developing countries will decrease from 5.4 per cent in 2008 to 1.3 per cent in 2009, which means a reduction in the average per capita income. In light of the stagnation and reduction of economic growth, the developing countries have seen an increase in poverty, unemployment, the cost of essential goods and malnutrition. With the drastic reduction in investment, there is a strong likelihood that the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved.

It is expected that in 2009 world trade will be reduced by at least 11 per cent in real terms and by 20 per cent in dollar terms. For the African continent, the prognosis points to a significant deceleration of the growth of production in 2009. However, it will remain positive and drop to 3 per cent in North Africa and 1 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. The medium- and low-income countries in this context will certainly require more support in the form of a coordinated effort at the international level to increase official development assistance.

The perspective of a solution to the crisis is significant. It requires, among other things, a new political strategy that includes regulation of the financial market. The recent meeting of the Group of 20 in Pittsburgh offers some elements of response. Indeed, management of the crisis in the context of globalization and interdependence requires an integrated response of the parties as well as a change in the global financial system, more efficient institutions, countercyclical policies, better monitoring of risk and institutional regulation. The outcome document adopted by consensus at the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis of 24 to 26 June 2009 (resolution 63/303, annex) contains recommendations to fight economic recession and establishes viable and safe financial practices, in addition to indicating important areas of intervention.

Cape Verde, despite the difficult situation created by the economic and financial crisis, seeks to preserve the gains already made in the various areas of the Millennium Development Goals, thanks to a prudent and pragmatic policy and taking its partners into account to help diminish the impact of the crisis on the archipelago.

We think all international partners must implement joint efforts to minimize the impact of the economic deceleration, especially for developing countries, and enable all to achieve more inclusive, equitable and balanced development, oriented towards economic sustainability, to help overcome poverty and inequity in order to avoid an unprecedented human crisis.

The Summit on Climate Change organized by the Secretary-General last week was an undeniable success. The Member States wished to participate in large numbers to reaffirm their determination to see this vital problem treated in a convincing, urgent and genuine manner. The head of State of one of the heavy-emitting countries declared that if we do not act now, no one will ever be able to do so, reinforcing what scientists have been demonstrating for some time: that our planet is at serious risk of not being able to assure life in all its fullness because of the consequences of climate change. And the time to act is now.

The participants departed the Summit convinced that there is no more time for evasion. The moment has come for concerted, coherent and systematic action to achieve a convincing and meaningful reduction of greenhouse gases, to slow global warming and avoid raised sea levels likely to endanger vast coastal regions throughout the world, particularly the small developing island States. Such States are increasingly vulnerable and suffer the most from the consequences of a situation created to a large extent by emitter States. At its summit here in New York on 21 September, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), of which Cape Verde is a member, adopted a declaration clarifying its position on various points being negotiated within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Cape Verde is a small archipelago with a small population, in a geographic location that leaves it simultaneously isolated in the ocean and dangerously exposed to the effects of climate change and global warming. As a Sahelian State, it has long faced drought, desertification and a serious lack of water. Those phenomena aggravate the population's poverty, hinder Government efforts and strongly affect actions in the areas of environmental preservation and human development.

In Cape Verde we are making efforts to make the best possible use of our river basins, saving water wherever possible and adopting modern irrigation methods with the help of new technologies. We are implementing an active policy in that area. A dam on one of our islands is energizing the local agricultural sector and allowing us to promote better subsistence methods among farmers, while helping us develop renewable power sources throughout the country with the goal of providing electricity to 95 per cent of the country by 2011. A research and development centre for renewable energies aimed at serving the entire West African region is under construction in Cape Verde.

The international community, and the developed countries in particular, must strive to support the specific dynamics of those States in the areas of adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change and to enable them to minimize the risks that burden them today, given that some of those States are already facing issues of mass dislocation and forced migrations.

For the people of Cape Verde, the ocean is more than a nurturing mother or a demanding lover — it is our vital source of civilization and inspiration. We want to protect it; we want to preserve it. But equally, along with the coastal nations of the Atlantic Ocean, particularly in its southern half, we want to see it be an area of exchange, not speculation, a realm of active solidarity, not unruly competition. Far from making it one more focus of human greed, let us preserve its unique value as a precious cradle of life and the repository of the hopes of our planet.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, chairman of the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines take this opportunity to extend deepest condolences to the people of the Philippines and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the lives tragically lost in the wake of tropical storm Ketsana. Our thoughts, prayers and solidarity are with them as they grapple with that catastrophe.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Mr. Treki to the leadership of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. His experience and abilities are well known and respected, and he has our full support in the coming year. Indeed, we in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are particularly pleased that the presidency

has moved from Nicaragua, a country touched by the Caribbean Sea, to a continent that is the ancestral home of the vast majority of our citizens. We have, in essence, kept the presidency within our extended family. We trust that he will continue the exemplary work of his predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, who fearlessly and tirelessly championed the role of the "G-192" in addressing global challenges.

We face many challenges within our international community, but at their most basic, the majority are symptomatic of a single underlying issue: a struggle by the powerful to cling to their dominion long after the legitimate bases of their power have faded. We find ourselves in a world governed by outdated norms and assumptions, and our failure to adapt has wrought disastrous consequences on our peoples.

In his welcome and inspiring maiden statement to the General Assembly last Wednesday, our esteemed brother and friend President Barack Obama of the United States correctly identified the challenges to our multilateral unity as "rooted in a discontent with the status quo" (see A/64/PV.3). We wholeheartedly agree and endorse that assessment.

It is a discontent with the status quo of a 63-year-old Security Council, which continues to administer our collective security unchanged and impervious to the logic of a new world. It is a discontent with the role, effectiveness and mandate of the 65-year-old Bretton Woods institutions, which were created in a bygone era to address bygone circumstances. It is a discontent with a 49-year-old blockade on the noble people of our neighbour Cuba, the continued illegal application of which is illogical when viewed through the prism of geopolitics, economics or humanitarianism, and can be successfully explained only by reference to narrow local political considerations.

It is a discontent, even, with the stagnation of efforts to change the status quo in other critical respects: the eight years of unresolved negotiations of the Doha Development Round, the 12 years of the toothless commitments of the Kyoto Protocol, and the seven years of unfulfilled Monterrey Consensus promises to achieve a 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, a full 40 years after this modest percentage was first mooted.

Through it all, the geopolitical status quo remains. The structural bases of international interaction are distressingly similar to their decades-old antecedents. Those structures were forged in the fires of World War II, hardened in the frost of the Cold War and entrenched by the legacies of colonialism and exploitation. But World War II has long since ended, the Cold War is relegated to history books, and the reach of formal colonialism continues to recede. The structures spawned by those historical episodes are no longer valid.

Our discontent is born not only of stagnation but also of exclusion. Although we have a seat in this hallowed building, it is often the seat of a spectator in a historical drama. The directors and actors script history not in the General Assembly, but in other rooms and locales, without our input or knowledge. In many significant ways we are attendees, rather than participants, on the international stage.

We are in the midst of a global financial and economic crisis of unparalleled depth and scope. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines played no part in the reckless speculation and corruption that precipitated this crisis, yet the people of our country are hard hit by its effects. Our tourism industry is suffering, remittances are shrinking, foreign direct investment is scarce, and the spectre of unemployment is a real and gathering regional threat. However, we are actively excluded from the solutions to this problem.

Last week, we learned that the Group of 20 (G-20) anointed itself "the premier forum for our international economic cooperation". Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is not a member of the G-20, nor were we consulted on its ascension to the ranks of arbiters of our economic fate. While there is an undeniable logic to a small group of the world's largest economies meeting informally to thrash out matters that affect only their own large economies, the logic fades in the face of a crisis that has spread rapidly and comprehensively to every corner of the globe.

Additionally, the G-20 faces a serious legitimacy problem. Aside from the Group's being non-inclusive and unofficial, many of the countries at that table represent the champions of the financial and economic orthodoxies that led the world down the rabbit hole to its current economic malaise.

Further, the G-20's recent self-congratulatory pronouncements of "mission accomplished" in the

midst of this economic upheaval are of cold comfort to the suffering peoples and countries of the world. While the G-20 may claim that its actions have "worked", and claim a "sense of normalcy", the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and our Caribbean region are under no such illusions. The invisible hand of the market is still clasped firmly around the throats of poor people and the developing countries of the world. We see none of the so-called green shoots that populate the fantasies of discredited economic cheerleaders.

Indeed, the seeds sown by this crisis may produce the strange and bitter fruit of increased poverty, suffering and social and political upheaval. The crisis itself, with its disproportionate impact on the poor, will only widen and deepen the yawning gap between developed and developing countries.

It is not merely the economic crisis against which the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to struggle heroically. Today, we face the triple threat of being globalized, climatized and stigmatized. We have already been globalized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) out of our trade in bananas, which, until very recently, was the engine of our economic growth. We are on the verge of being climatized out of our reliance on tourism as its development substitute, as climate change wreaks havoc on our weather systems, intensifies our hurricanes, destroys our coral reefs, damages our costal infrastructure and erodes our beaches.

Now, we face being stigmatized out of our transition into financial services, as the G-20, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other non-inclusive bodies seek to scapegoat and root out so-called tax havens in a pathetic effort to cast a wide and indiscriminate net of blame across a swath of legitimate and well-regulated countries' development efforts.

We note the irony of hearing these paternalistic prescriptions from the same countries that are unable to stem corruption and mismanagement within their own borders, where corporations recklessly squander trillions of dollars and a single buccaneer investor can make $50 billion — an amount greater than the combined annual budget expenditures of the entire Caribbean Community subregion — disappear into thin air.

The unholy trinity of exogenous assaults on our development prospects posed by globalization, climatization and stigmatization cannot be ignored, nor can the security threats engendered by the illicit trade in firearms and narcotics. We in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines find ourselves unfortunately located between the supply of and demand for these poisons and weapons, and their deleterious effects rip holes in our cohesive social fabric. The Caribbean, which produces not one single firearm or one single kilo of cocaine, is awash in drugs and guns, and is now the subregion with the world's highest per capita murder rate.

Our plight cannot be ignored. Indeed, we are heartened that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which inexplicably ended its presence in our region, has now seen fit to reconsider its decision to cede the Caribbean to drug cartels and murderers. We hope that it represents a genuine and generous recommitment to our regional challenges.

As a small archipelagic State, we, more than most, are affected and threatened by the ravages of climate change. We, more than most, recognize the critical importance of a meaningful, measurable and enforceable global compact on climate change. However, we do not simply want to "seal the deal" at Copenhagen, as posited by the sloganeers of the United Nations. We want to seal the right deal, the just deal, and the deal that ensures our continued survival. We most emphatically will not seal a suicide pact that will assure the elimination of small island States and our way of life.

The Alliance of Small Island States has recently issued a declaration that contains what we consider to be the essential contours of any meaningful agreement on climate change. We trust that our blameless position on the front lines of climate change fallout will be considered and respected in the global effort to seal the deal. We cannot, as in the case of the world economy, be excluded in any way from the solutions to a problem that so fundamentally affects us.

The theme of exclusion is equally applicable to our friends in Taiwan. The United Nations and its specialized agencies must find ways to ensure the meaningful participation of the 23 million people of Taiwan. Just as their economic strength has merited inclusion in the WTO and the universality of global health challenges have logically compelled their participation in the World Health Assembly, so too should the global reach of climate change merit their

meaningful participation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The interconnected networks of global air travel and our shared safety concerns similarly mandate the participation of Taiwan in the International Civil Aviation Organization. The Government and people of Taiwan have advanced a reasonable and responsible policy of engagement to usher a new era in cross-strait relations. The international community can and should encourage and reward this fledgling rapprochement with meaningful participation in the relevant specialized agencies.

Any cursory analysis of the excluded and the included, of the discontented and the defenders of the status quo, will quickly reveal that many current inequities are rooted in our colonial history and that the struggle for geopolitical balance and inclusiveness is indeed the last struggle of decolonization as we, the former colonial territories, remain excluded from the inner sanctums and power structures that were established by and for the colonizers in a time long since passed.

On 27 October this year, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary of independence. However, we recognize that independence is a process, not a one-time event. Our independence journey continues today. Thirty years after gaining formal independence, we retain the Queen as our Head of State, and our highest judicial appeals travel from our shores to the United Kingdom to be decided by Her Majesty in Council. While we cherish a special, modern and respectful relationship with the United Kingdom, we do not intend to tarry on colonial premises a moment longer than is necessary.

Even as we wage a wider war of attrition against geopolitical colonialism, our citizens are preparing to vote on a new and home-grown constitution that will break the chains of outmoded dependence and place Saint Vincent and the Grenadines firmly on its two feet as a truly independent republic. This new proposed constitution, the product of six years of open, transparent and inclusive public consultations, is testament to the political maturity of our people and to the value of locally tailored solutions to externally imposed impediments.

In a similar manner, our brothers and sisters in the developing world, including Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Turkey, Mexico, Malaysia, Iran, Libya, Brazil and many others, have forged new links and bonds of friendship, cooperation and solidarity with our country that go beyond historical, geographical or colonial linkages. We value these friendships and partnerships as important additions to our traditional and treasured allies in the United States, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Canada and the European Union.

Just as our myriad bilateral friendships and partnerships span geographic, economic and ideological divides, so too must our multilateral cooperation be inclusive and participatory. We can no longer maintain the illusion of holding hands in artificial solidarity across the moats and turrets of structural and systemic inequalities. Modern multilateralism cannot proceed on the bases of the included and the excluded, of the political haves and have-nots, nor can token assimilations of individual developing countries serve to mask the necessity for deep structural changes to existing power arrangements.

We urge our brothers and sisters who have gained limited access to the halls of power to not only be a voice for their excluded brothers and to not only remember where they came from, but also to view themselves as the tip of the spear, the thin edge of the wedge that will use their newfound privileges to dismantle these structures from within, even as we continue to make our presence felt outside the citadels of stasis and indifference.

Psalm 118 of the Bible teaches that the stone that the builder rejected shall become the cornerstone. We, the poor and developing countries of the world, are the stones that the builders of this body refused and ignored. In rebuilding and revitalizing, either we will become the cornerstones of this institution, or this edifice of multilateral cooperation will crumble into irrelevance and illegitimacy.

Addressing the economic crisis, poverty and development is not an academic exercise. Climate change is not a theoretical event. Reform of global governance is not a diplomatic parlour game. They are the clear and present dangers of our time, and they reflect the need for the real and inclusive participation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Caribbean and the developing world. They represent also a need to reflect and address our discontent with the status quo perpetuated for far too long.

We stand now in the autumn of our discontent, but, as Gandhi said, "Healthy discontent is the prelude to progress". The challenge of the discontented is to rise above ancient animosities and artificial balkanization to achieve the clarity of vision, unity of purpose and political will to finally and successfully storm the castles of stagnation and status quo and to drive our peoples, our politics and our planet into a new era of genuine inclusiveness, equity and meaningful, people-centred progress.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexandru Cujba, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Cujba (Moldova): I am deeply honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Republic of Moldova. At the outset, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, to wish him success and to assure his Bureau of the full support of our delegation. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his high competence and professionalism, and his tireless efforts in leading the United Nations in these complex times.

The distinguished speakers who have taken the floor in this debate have elaborated extensively on the most pressing issues that the international community has faced over the past year. The current financial and economic crisis, the food and energy crises, the first flu pandemic of this century, and climate change have been at the core of deliberations in the United Nations, revealing the central role of the Organization in dealing with these problems. A reformed, robust and effective Organization has to deliver prompt reactions and sustainable responses to the major challenges to peace, security and development: disarmament and non-proliferation, climate change, food and energy security, and the spread of international terrorism.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General in strengthening the United Nations and promoting the core values enshrined in our founding Charter: the fundamental principles of peace, justice and human rights. The Republic of Moldova supports the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations aimed at creating a revitalized, representative, efficient and more responsive Organization. Following significant advances in the reform of its principal organs, we recognize the steps being undertaken towards reform of the Security Council, which undoubtedly necessitates a firm political pledge on the part of the entire membership.

In our opinion, the expansion of the Security Council is a matter not only of equity but also of efficiency. Any proposal for reform of the Council has to reflect the legitimate aspirations of the regional groups. Thus, in supporting the expansion of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories, we believe it indispensable to allocate an additional non-permanent seat to the Eastern European Group.

By virtue of the primary responsibility of the Security Council laid down in the United Nations Charter, its reform should also contain provisions for consolidating United Nations operational capacities in the field and revitalizing peacekeeping operations in order to make them more effective and capable of achieving their goals, including the development of cooperation with regional organizations and Member States for the resolution of conflicts in various areas of the globe.

Building a safer world requires the greater commitment of Member States in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We have recently witnessed a historic summit of the Security Council, which voted to stop the spread of nuclear arms and endorsed a broad framework of action to reduce global nuclear dangers. The Republic of Moldova welcomes the results of the most recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and looks forward to continued positive trends in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The current global economic and financial crisis, one of the most serious since the creation of the United Nations, has affected virtually all countries, including the Republic of Moldova. In 2008, the previous Communist Government in Chisinau denied the existence of an economic and financial crisis; only after its defeat in the elections of 29 July 2009 did its representatives begin to raise the alarm.

The current administration, the Alliance for European Integration, is assuming full responsibility

for managing the economic crisis by attracting funds from international financial organizations, securing foreign investment, providing jobs, reviving the real sector of the economy, ensuring the de-monopolization of production sectors, and liberalizing exports and imports. The liberal democratic Government relies on the support of United Nations institutions and all international structures in promoting the rule of law, safeguarding fundamental human rights and freedoms, and ensuring the functionality of democratic institutions and the freedom of mass media.

The Republic of Moldova followed intently the work of the high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held this summer at the United Nations, and welcomed the adoption of its Outcome Document (resolution 63/303). The Conference highlighted once again the role of the United Nations and gave a strong impetus to the dialogue on identifying solutions for overcoming the crisis and reforming the international financial architecture.

At the same time, Moldova stands for strengthening the Economic and Social Council's coordinating role in formulating global economic and social policies and in further promoting active dialogue with the international financial institutions and the Governments of Member States in implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

Nine years ago, in September 2000, the world's leaders committed our countries to a global partnership in fighting poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Today, in the context of the global economic and financial crisis, considerable common efforts on the part of developed and developing countries alike are needed to achieve our commitments by 2015. We welcome the decision to convene a high-level meeting in 2010 dedicated to evaluating the Millennium Summit decisions.

The General Assembly has proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation and the International Year of Human Rights Learning, and 21 September as an International Day of Peace. It is in this vein that we would like to reiterate the necessity for an increased United Nations role and strengthened cooperation with regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in preventing and managing crisis and conflict situations; guaranteeing respect for and the promotion of fundamental human rights in separatist regions; undertaking more efficient international actions to stabilize the situation in countries affected by internal conflict; and taking a complex approach under international law to mediation and conflict resolution. The intensification of international cooperation with a view to solving conflicts and preventing the future emergence or escalation of crisis situations that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States is of paramount importance for the Republic of Moldova, which faces a secessionist movement in the eastern regions of the country.

Respecting the principle of the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we are confident that the demilitarization and democratization of the Transdniestrian region are indispensable to a viable solution to the Transdniestrian problem. The new Liberal Democratic Government's coalition will undertake sustainable efforts to identify a lasting solution to the Transdniestrian problem in the current five plus two format and will consistently urge an increased United States and European Union (EU) role in the resolution process. Concurrently, the Republic of Moldova will revive its efforts towards the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country, replacing the present peacekeeping operation with a multinational mission with an international mandate, and achieving the integration of the country in all socio-economic segments by encouraging the broad participation of the non-governmental sector.

We will consistently act in accordance with the law on the basic provisions of the Special Legal Status of Localities from the Left Bank of the Dniester River, adopted unanimously by Parliament on 22 July 2005. Focused on the creation of conditions needed for reconciliation and advancing the resolution process, we put forward a series of initiatives in 2007 to strengthen trust and security between the two banks of the Dniester River, in particular by ensuring free movement, instituting common participation in developing and implementing projects to restore and modernize infrastructure, and addressing various social issues.

Unfortunately, the so-called Transdniestrian authorities time and again have undermined these initiatives by introducing illegal customs taxes, impeding the elections process in the villages situated on the left bank of the Dniester River, and confiscating school premises, gravely violating the right of the

Moldovan citizens to study in their native language. The implementation of democratic reforms and the normalization of the economic and social climate on the right side of the Dniester will accelerate the resolution of the Transdniestrian problem.

The Republic of Moldova appreciates the activity of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine and its close cooperation with the relevant border management bodies in both States. Its contribution to border security and transparency has created a more constructive atmosphere in which to seek a resolution of the Transdniestrian problem. The Republic of Moldova will further direct its efforts to resuming negotiations in the existing format in view of resolving the Transdniestrian problem. We count on the consistent support and political will of all mediators and observers in the resolution of this conflict.

Ongoing terrorist activities in various parts of the world demonstrate that terrorism continuously threatens the security, fundamental democratic values, human rights and the letter of the law that are the basis of the United Nations Charter. This scourge can be defeated only by firm, common action by the international community. In this context, we would like to reaffirm that the Republic of Moldova fully participates in the global fight against terrorism by implementing measures at the national level and by contributing to the international community's efforts. The new Government of Moldova will take concrete action in combating international terrorism in accordance with international instruments, pertinent resolutions of the Security Council and relevant national documents, such as our national strategy for preventing and combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

In compliance with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (see resolution 60/288), the Republic of Moldova will further contribute to future United Nations efforts at consolidating international legislation to combat terrorism, especially in view of finalizing the negotiations of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism and organizing a high-level conference on terrorism under United Nations auspices. We believe that special attention needs to be paid to fighting those aspects of terrorism that are nourished by separatist tendencies that affect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Climate change poses a grave challenge to the international community. Global warming and its related effects, including natural disasters, have become major threats to our peoples and to international security. Its consequences greatly affect vulnerable States, compromising economic growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. International cooperation is essential to dealing with the obvious threat of climate change. We have to raise alarm concerning the urgent need to strengthen regional and global cooperation and to enhance the assistance of donor States to developing countries and to countries with economies in transition.

In recent years, the Republic of Moldova has been confronted with considerable natural calamities, from acute droughts to severe floods. Each year, the intensity and frequency of these phenomena increase. The harm caused to the population, to the agricultural and food sectors, as well as to the overall national economy is huge. In this respect, the implementation of the United Nations Conventions addressing climate change and desertification and the development of an international strategy for disaster reduction are of increasing urgency for countries severely affected by droughts and desertification.

The Republic of Moldova recognizes the importance of environmental protection to ensuring the sustainable development of the country, as well as the need for this issue to inform all national policies. In this connection, we welcome the outcome of last week's Summit on Climate Change and strongly support the continuation of negotiations. We hope that we will conclude the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference with a new far-reaching document. We praise the Secretary-General's efforts in mobilizing the political will needed for the adoption of a new, equitable and ambitious agreement.

The Republic of Moldova strongly supports the activity of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis set up and led by the Secretary-General. The efficient collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant United Nations structures, aimed at mobilizing new funds in order to overcome the global food crisis, will significantly contribute to the achievement of a comprehensive action plan on food security. We support the convening of the World Summit on Food Security in Rome in November this year.

The Republic of Moldova is firm in its path towards European integration and committed to the universal values of peace, democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and economic freedom. European integration constitutes the major strategic goal of Moldova's foreign and internal policies. We welcome positive developments in our relations with the European Union and their progress over the past few years, particularly after the victory of the Alliance for European Integration in the parliamentary elections held on 29 July 2009.

The new Government will firmly pursue the goal of rehabilitating the image of the Republic of Moldova in the international arena and will negotiate in the near future a new association agreement with the European Union. The leaders of the Alliance for European Integration are firmly committed to an efficient reform of the socio-economic system in the Republic of Moldova, without which the advancement of the country towards progress and prosperity is hardly possible. Those commitments represent eloquent proof of the positive evolution of the political situation in the Republic of Moldova after the recent parliamentary elections. The democratic process has been resumed.

The new Parliament has accepted the responsibility of complying with all the recommendations formulated by the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with regard to the events of 7 April. Those recommendations call for Moldova to improve its electoral legislation and to initiate the process of direct application of EU legislation. From this perspective, we count on the support and opportunities offered by the United Nations and its Member States to promote Moldova's political and social economic objectives, its aspirations to European integration, the resolution of the Transdniestrian problem and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm the adherence of the Republic of Moldova to the ideals of the United Nations and the will to further cooperate through concrete action with a view to accomplishing the commitments assumed. While respecting the diversity of views, cultures and religions of everyone, we must also be united in reaching for a common goal — protecting humanity and preserving human dignity as a foremost universal value.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Anastassis Mitsialis, chairman of the delegation of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Mitsialis (Greece): On behalf of Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Ms. Dora Bakoyannis, who unfortunately could not be in New York today, I would like to address the General Assembly.

Allow me first to congratulate the President of this body, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki. I am confident that his extensive prior experience will serve us well and guide us through the trials that we are called upon to address. I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his tireless efforts to promote the work of the General Assembly during its sixty-third session.

I cannot but take pride in addressing the General Assembly of the most important ecumenical institution humankind has ever created, the original idea of which was initially conceived and put into practice by Greeks 25 centuries ago. The ancient Greek Amphictyony was the precursor and matrix of the concept of multilateralism, which is the only way to deal effectively with the many and varied challenges faced by the international community. The United Nations is in fact, along with the various regional alliances and organizations, the essential framework for joining forces and collectively confronting our common threats and promoting our common values.

Greece currently has the privilege of being at the helm of one of the most important regional security organizations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE's consensus-based decision-making process, along with its comprehensive approach to security, is a testament to the power of multilateralism. Greece has pledged to be an honest broker and to work with every single participating State to realize the common vision for peace, security and development for all 56 members of the organization. The Corfu Process, our common promise to turn the page on European security within the framework of a structured all-inclusive dialogue, proves once more that where there is a will there is a way.

Indeed, our annual gathering at the United Nations is important, but it is not enough. What is needed first and foremost is the political will to turn words into deeds. We stand at a most critical juncture

for our environmental, social and economic future, and all of us — policy-makers, diplomats, scientists, activists and concerned citizens alike — have a responsibility to preserve the habitability of our planet and hand over to our children a better world than the one bequeathed to us.

It was Aristotle who said that nature acts as if she foresees the future, and currently nature's auguries are not encouraging at all. We cannot afford to forget that our planet is in a state of environmental emergency. Scientific evidence on the issue is compelling. The socio-economic impact of climate change on the global economy, if left unchecked, is likely to dwarf the current economic recession.

Now is the time to speed up our joint efforts to effectively address the negative impact of climate change, while respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the respective capabilities of each country. Copenhagen will be the litmus test of our commitment to an ambitious, all-inclusive climate change agreement.

The urgency of the situation is such that, if I may paraphrase the man who first set foot on the moon, even if man now takes a giant leap in trying to mitigate the consequences of climate change, it will unfortunately still only be a small step for mankind. But small steps are important too. Greece continues to strongly support the financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects and of low-carbon development strategies. We have repeatedly proven our commitment to this effect by supporting the most vulnerable countries' adaptation to climate change through the provision of a total sum of €21 million through the end of 2011.

The challenges posed to all nations by the current economic crisis require an ambitious and imaginative range of responses that provide effective and lasting solutions. The United Nations can play a vital role in achieving these objectives. Our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) needs to be reaffirmed. Regenerating the world economy and promoting sustainable pro-growth policies are fundamental to solving the crisis and essential to maintaining and improving progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. Support for the most vulnerable nations, which have been even more deeply affected by food insecurity and climate change, is where a special effort must be made.

Our action against hunger and want has not yet produced the desired results, while humanitarian and development aid needs to be streamlined in order to be more effective and productive. Synergetic multilateral action is urgently needed. People living on the edge have run out of time. They need to know whether the decisions of their leaders at the Pittsburgh summit are the right decisions that will put us back on the road to development.

We know that climate change, the economic crisis and the North-South divide are exacerbating pressures on people to migrate. These crises are creating living conditions that contribute to one of the greatest disgraces of humanity and one of the greatest insults to human dignity — the modern slave trade or human trafficking.

Some 192 million people have been forced from the lands of their birth. Almost a million people have been arrested since 2000 while trying to cross from Turkey to Greece in their quest for a better life. This modern form of the slave trade has claimed thousands of lives. We owe it to them and to the people who have lost their lives to change things, to fight traffickers and work together to discourage illegal migration by bringing development and giving a vision to countries that migrants leave.

Athens will host the Global Forum on Migration and Development from 2 to 5 November 2009. We seek specific proposals for actions and policies and we want to formulate best practices for adoption by the participating States.

Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace, stability and security. The international commitment to confronting terrorism must remain strong, and our efforts to successfully address this challenge should be intensified. But if our efforts are to be successful and self-sustaining, they must garner the broadest possible consensus and acceptance and be based on respect for the fundamental principles of international law and international humanitarian law and on full respect for and the protection of human rights.

This brings me to an issue that has come to the forefront of international attention and concern — the issue of human rights. Respect for human rights is one of the cornerstones of the contemporary legal order. Human rights conventions and institutions have raised the awareness and sensitivity of States, Governments,

civil society, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Greece has submitted its candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2012-2015, as it wishes to play a proactive role in the protection of human rights. We believe that the Council can play a crucial role in the improvement of the situation of human rights worldwide. That role should not be restricted to pointing out the violators, but should mainly help overcome shortfalls and implement universal standards.

Interest in the protection of human rights must be genuine and anthropocentric, and protection must be carried out in full compliance with the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We should award a special place to gender issues in the system of human rights protection. Women's rights deserve all our attention, because they continue to be violated systematically and flagrantly in many corners of the world. Education and equal working opportunities are key areas.

As I said earlier, Greece approached its current term in office as OSCE Chair with a heightened sense of responsibility and sensitivity, based on the belief that security and stability are not and should not be a zero-sum game. In the post-cold-war era, where security challenges are multifaceted and interlinked, the security needs of all States should be given due consideration despite contradictory and often mutually exclusive political perceptions of what is right and just.

Since January, our aim has been to build consensus and achieve collective and comprehensive solutions to deep-rooted and protracted conflicts, convinced that enhancing the security of one will undoubtedly enhance the security of all. Our efforts have been based on mutual trust and confidence and on the realization that security is both indivisible and comprehensive. In some cases however, as in Georgia, consensus has been elusive.

Our most important collective achievement has been the launching of the Corfu Process, a profound and open debate on the future of security in Europe. The Corfu Process marks a pan-European effort to revisit and redefine the broader European security system. At the Athens Ministerial Meeting in December, we aim to lay a solid foundation, so that our dialogue will start producing tangible results.

A few days ago the Security Council adopted resolution 1887 (2009), thus taking an important step in the direction of advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We applaud that important decision. Yet, practical tools are essential for the achievement of high-minded political goals such as this. Greece firmly believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Broad participation in it, along with the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements and the implementation of the additional protocol, is, beyond any doubt, the most effective answer to threats of nuclear proliferation. It is equally important to have additional ratifications of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the early drafting of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

As regards major international and regional issues, conflicts and flashpoints, Greece fully subscribes to the European Union (EU) policy and action, as described by its presidency. The role of the EU in the handling of a number of urgent and difficult situations, such as piracy in Somalia, has proved to be vital, successful and effective.

The broader region of South-Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean is at the forefront of Greek foreign policy. It is a vital region from a geopolitical and geo-strategic perspective, but also one of the most volatile areas of the world. Our vision for the region incorporates the consolidation of security, stability and development. Our aim is to work with all neighbouring States in the region to promote stability, democracy and robust economies, with the ultimate goal of elevating the quality of life of the citizens to the highest European standards. This vision is founded on four pillars: first, the establishment and safeguarding of good neighbourly relations; secondly, the full integration of all the countries of South-Eastern Europe into European and Euro-Atlantic structures; thirdly, the enhancement and further deepening of regional cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, economy and trade; and, last but not least, the strengthening of bonds and cultural interaction at the level of civil societies. We are doing everything in our power to materialize this vision.

We continue to build upon the agenda of the Thessaloniki European Council of 2003, which laid the

foundations for the integration of the Western Balkan countries into the European Union, on the condition, of course, that the accession criteria and requirements are fully met. The prospect of a future within Europe for almost all the Western Balkan countries is now within reach and seems more feasible than ever.

At the same time, Greece is promoting regional cooperation by financing of and participating in significant infrastructure projects, and by joining forces with other neighbouring countries to establish a reliable and adequate energy-distribution network. It is one of the top investment and trade partners in most of the neighbouring countries, thus contributing to the development of the entire area.

Above all, we are working hard to establish and consolidate good neighbourly relations by pursuing and promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes on the basis of international law. However, long-standing disputes persist. For the past 15 years Greece has participated in United Nations-led negotiations on the issue of the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Greece has participated in good faith. Regrettably, no substantive or tangible progress has been made so far, despite the fact that Greece has taken a huge step towards a compromise. We have accepted the use of the term "Macedonia" along with a geographical qualifier that reflects reality. Of the large geographical region of Macedonia, only a part falls within our neighbour's territory. So how can this country claim exclusive rights to the name? The persistence of the leadership in Skopje in claiming exclusive rights to the name by denying a geographic qualifier and the anachronistic rhetoric and policies that run contrary to the principle of good neighbourly relations raise serious questions as to that Government's real motives. Greece is negotiating for a solution that will respect the dignity of both countries and both peoples. We are negotiating for a clear solution to which both sides will agree and which our neighbour will use with pride in its dealings with everyone — a solution that will make everyone a winner.

The Cyprus issue is still an open wound at the very heart of Europe. Thanks to the efforts of President Christofias, a new round of talks has started under the auspices of the United Nations. This gives rise to hope, but there is still a long way to go, and there are many hurdles and difficulties to overcome. Greece supports a definitive, sustainable and just solution, based on the United Nations resolutions and compatible with European Union values, principles and institutional framework, one that will lead to the reunification of the island. We strongly believe that the two communities should be left alone, with no external pressures, guidance or interventions, to decide on their common future. The solution must be theirs and theirs alone. Artificial deadlines, strict time frames and threats of a permanent division have no role in the quest for a durable solution. They add unnecessary pressure and strain to the delicate negotiating process and raise questions about the true intentions of those promoting them.

The current situation in Cyprus is unacceptable. Turkish military forces continue to occupy part of the territory of a European Union member State. Turkey — a European Union candidate — refuses to recognize a fully fledged European Union member and future partner. Once-vibrant cities like Famagusta remain ghost towns. The families of missing persons continue to wonder about their loved ones' fates, while the unspeakable atrocities of the past come to light, little by little. This picture is unimaginable in the eyes of the average European citizen and completely incompatible with today's European reality. We hope that the Cypriot people — both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots — will be able to leave behind the painful past and look, reunited, to the future that awaits them within the European family, which constitutes the best guarantee for their security and prosperity. Turkey, which holds the key to the solution of the Cyprus issue, knows full well that such a solution would also speed up its own journey to the European Union.

Greece is probably the most sincere supporter of Turkey's accession to the European Union — and this is true even at a difficult time. It is our conviction that Turkey would be a better neighbour for Greece if it carried out all necessary reforms and became a European Union member State. Turkish membership would contribute to stability in our region. Yet, this is not a blank check, nor is it a leap of faith. In order to become a member of the European Union, Turkey will have to fulfil all the criteria set by the European Union.

The Government I represent has invested in Greek-Turkish rapprochement. Kostas Karamanlis is the first Greek Prime Minister to have paid an official visit to Ankara in 40 years. We dared to turn the page. We went beyond words, but we have not seen an active response from the other side. Turkey declares that it

wants zero problems with its neighbours. Yet, Turkish fighter jets kept flying only a few metres above the rooftops of Greek islanders' homes throughout the summer. The Turkish Parliament maintains a threat of war against my country.

Disputes should be settled peacefully and in accordance with international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which embodies customary law, shows the way to settle maritime boundary disputes peacefully. Greece would welcome a decision by Turkey to follow the example of the other 160 Members of the United Nations that have ratified the Convention. Such a move, along with clear political will on the Turkish side to invest in friendly relations with Greece, could strike a definitive blow to the tensions and mistrust in our bilateral relations and contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in our entire region.

Aristotle proposed that it is possible to fail in many ways, while to succeed is possible in only one way. It is our conviction that this one way is effective multilateralism led by the United Nations. We need the leadership of the United Nations, if we are to carry out our ultimate mission — safeguarding the dignity, lives and freedoms of the citizens we represent. We need to give the Secretary-General the tools to guide this Organization, so that the United Nations can once again take up its central role in international life and meet the myriad challenges facing humanity. We have to identify the weaknesses of the United Nations and we must have the courage to redress them, using common sense, just as we would do at home, in our countries, because every failure of the United Nations is a personal failure for each and every one of us, and because the world is changing, and we have to change with it.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carsten Staur, chairman of the delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mr. Staur (Denmark): At this moment in time, major economic and environmental challenges are giving rise to increasing global concerns and impacting people all over this planet. To meet those challenges effectively, we need, more than ever, a dynamic and proactive multilateral system. We need the United Nations to provide global answers to global challenges.

In less than three months, we will meet again in Copenhagen to seal the deal on climate change. The effects of climate change are increasingly felt all over the world, not least in developing countries, and the whole world is looking to us for answers. And answers we must provide — new directions for the future, transformational changes in the way we do business and a new paradigm for growth and development. In this respect, I do welcome the leadership of the Secretary-General as demonstrated by his call for a Summit on Climate Change a few days ago and by his concluding remarks on that occasion.

The message is clear: we must act now to avoid potentially disastrous changes in the global climate. The focus in Copenhagen three months from now will be on three deliverables. First, we must agree on a common goal for a significant reduction in global carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and we must set clear targets for both medium and longer term. Secondly, we must agree on a pathway towards achieving these targets. And, thirdly, we must set in motion the policies and measures to sustain our efforts on that pathway.

Reducing CO_2 emissions is a challenge for industrialized countries, emerging economies and developing countries alike. There is no contradiction between economic growth and ambitious policies to address climate change. Pursuing a green economy is possible, as shown by the example of, among others, my own country. And, in this context, it is also important to keep in mind the security risks emanating from climate change in all parts of the world. I welcome the Secretary-General's recent report on this issue entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications" (A/64/350), and look forward to further deliberations on this topic.

The ongoing financial and economic crisis is reversing hard-won progress in developing countries striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The international community must assist the poorest of those countries in mitigating the immediate effects of the crisis, while at the same time ensuring that we do not lose sight of the longer-term challenges in relation to the MDGs and the climate change agenda. There is an imminent risk that the economic crisis will lead to the overall stagnation — or even the reduction — of official development assistance. That is a challenge we must counter and overcome, and it is more crucial than ever that all donors speed up delivery on their aid commitments.

African countries, in particular, are facing significant obstacles in their efforts to achieve the MDGs. As recommended by the Africa Commission and the MDG3 Global Call to Action, both initiated by the Government of Denmark, there is a need to focus strongly on employment for young people, economic empowerment of women and private sector-led economic growth. Renewed focus on those policy areas will also be essential in coping with the economic crisis and its impact on the continent.

As we embark on the final stage towards 2015, the upcoming 2010 MDG Summit gives us an important opportunity to identify means to speed up achievement of the MDGs. Denmark looks forward to this occasion and is ready to engage actively in the process.

In an increasingly globalized and dynamic world, where the problems we face tend to become ever more complex and intertwined, it is important to treasure and uphold the principles and the objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations: to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; to establish conditions under which justice and respect for international obligations can be maintained; and to promote social progress and better standards of living.

States must protect their own populations, and States must be accountable to the global community. In that context, I welcome the recent debate held in this Hall on the responsibility to protect, which showed overwhelming support for the concept on the part of Member States. It bodes well for our continued deliberations on that issue.

I should also like to use this opportunity to encourage all United Nations Members that have not yet done so to become States parties to the International Criminal Court. There should be no impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious international crimes.

Among the most serious present dangers to peace and security is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of utmost importance. The meeting of the Security Council on 24 September, headed by President Obama (see S/PV.6191), provided ample evidence. We welcome the negotiations between the United States and Russia on reductions to follow up on the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms, and we welcome President Obama's commitment to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, both of which will have a positive impact on the NPT Review Conference.

I should like to take the opportunity to call on Iran and the Democratic People' s Republic of Korea to comply with their obligations to suspend enrichment activities and to start negotiations on transparent civilian nuclear programmes, as set forth in Security Council resolutions.

The election in Afghanistan was far from perfect. We need to engage with the new Government to create the crucial legitimacy between the Afghan Government and the Afghan people. The new Afghan compact to be built is that between the Government and the people, and our role should be to strengthen that compact and hold the Government accountable. In terms of the role of the international community, we need to be better coordinated and more effective in our support for building the capacity of the Afghan Government. In this the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan play a crucial role.

In neighbouring Pakistan, the international community and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan must seize the opportunity to support the democratic Government in fighting poverty and extremism. We must help Pakistan build a stable, democratic and prosperous State. This would be a significant contribution to peace and development in South Asia. I warmly welcome the efforts of the Government to fight terrorism, while, at the same time, it tries to alleviate the hardship experienced by Pakistan's internally displaced persons (IDPs). It is a positive development that so many IDPs have returned. Now, a full and fast implementation of the Malakand development strategy is important.

The deadlock in the Middle East peace process and the high level of regional tensions demand new international efforts to promote stability and peace in the region. We are encouraged to see the enhanced American engagement in the Middle East, and we urge all in the region and all parties to the Middle East conflict to honour the Road Map commitments, move speedily ahead and, once and for all, settle their differences in accordance with the international agreements and the Arab Peace Initiative. Furthermore, Denmark is in favour of expanding the mandate of the

Quartet to include a regional dimension. Also, the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks should feature permanently on the agenda of the Quartet.

Pirates operating in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia are a security challenge that poses new legal challenges. Denmark has taken the lead in the international community's work to identify practical and legal solutions so as to ensure the prosecution of suspected pirates. We welcome the increasingly active involvement of the United Nations in that issue.

In that respect, we have to remember that what is taking place on the open sea is closely linked to the situation on the ground in Somalia. Bringing security and stability to the Somalis is of the highest priority, and Denmark supports the efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, and the Djibouti process.

The United Nations itself must be able to change in order to effectively meet and deliver on all those new challenges. It is important to keep up momentum in the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the Security Council in order to adapt that key body to the world of today. The United Nations peacekeeping commitments continue to play a decisive role in global peace and security, with now more than 100,000 peacekeepers deployed in nearly 20 missions globally. However, the immense growth and the demand for strengthening the capacity to manage and to sustain those peacekeeping operations have revealed shortfalls pertaining to the decision-making processes and the engagements themselves. Denmark, therefore, warmly supports recent initiatives that would enable us to meet the growing demands with a system in place that is more effective, more transparent and more accountable.

Security is a precondition to programme delivery. Some degree of risk cannot be avoided, but the challenge is to mitigate it. Denmark, therefore, supports the continuing overhaul of security assessments and procedures. However, the situation in a country after the end of a conflict is also often extremely volatile. There is a need to ensure quick, effective and efficient support in post-conflict situations and to strengthen peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations is uniquely suited to lead those efforts, and we welcome the strong emphasis on that issue and look forward to the review of the peacebuilding architecture next year.

The work of the United Nations in the area of gender, women' s rights and development has for too long been fragmented and underfunded. In that light, the recent decision by the General Assembly in resolution 63/311 to create a new gender entity within the United Nations is of great significance. We will support the Secretary-General in every possible way in his efforts to ensure the swift establishment of such an entity. The rapid creation of a new gender entity will represent a milestone in the important work of reforming the United Nations system.

All United Nations entities, funds and programmes and the Secretariat need to act more coherently. On the operational side, we strongly support the "delivering as one" initiative which seeks to base the various parts of the system on a common understanding of needs and priorities and with full country ownership of the joint programme. It is a collective responsibility and an opportunity to comprehensively pursue that agenda. More effective and efficient ways of working system-wide are important; therefore, harmonization of the Organization' s business practices must be accelerated across the system.

The President returned to the Chair.

Multilateral cooperation is the best means of maintaining international peace and security and of responding to the challenges, risks and opportunities in an interdependent and globalized world. This Organization holds great legitimacy and moral force, and we encourage the United Nations — Member States, the entire organizational system and the Secretariat — to seize the moment and take the lead in addressing the new global challenges. An ambitious and successful outcome to the upcoming fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December would be a significant step in that direction.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ronald Jean Jumeau, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Seychelles.

Mr. Jumeau (Seychelles): On behalf of President James Michel of Seychelles, leader of one of the smallest nations of this Assembly, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

With a population of just over 85,000, we are painfully aware of our vulnerability as a nation at the mercy of the ebb and flow of global tides. Our vulnerability is all the more acute in this age marked by economic and other crises and the increasingly destructive effects of climate change. However, precisely because of that, our citizens are aware of our responsibility as a nation within the community of nations. We are aware that the solutions to our problems do not lie solely within our borders. As an assembly of nations, we must take into account more than ever the responsibility that we have and that we share. That is our responsibility to our peoples and to humanity as a whole.

The international community has not shirked that responsibility in the face of the world financial crisis, for example, as every nation has had to react in one way or another. In Seychelles, our inherent vulnerabilities and economic imbalances, which had accumulated over time, meant that we had to act earlier than many other States to face up to the crisis. We entered into a Standby Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and are also discussing debt rescheduling through the Paris Club.

The process has been difficult for every Seychellois, but we are seeing the results, and our nation is emerging stronger and more resilient. We still have a long way to go, but we, and our multilateral and bilateral partners, have all been surprised at how quickly we have emerged and managed to improve our economic situation. The process has also marked a milestone in the relationship between multilateral financial institutions and a small island developing State. It has proved to us that, although the voices of the smaller States are often drowned in the tumult of the international arena, the instruments of the global economy can be adapted to meet the needs of a smaller partner.

Our specificities and vulnerabilities have been recognized throughout the discussions with our multilateral and bilateral partners. Seychelles would like to salute the role played by the IMF, the World Bank and the African Development Bank in that process. We would also like to express our appreciation to our bilateral partners and other organizations that have supported us in one way or another in facing up to the crisis. It is an example of a responsibility shared. Through shared responsibility, a crisis can be contained. Through shared responsibility, what appeared to be impossible has become achievable.

It is our duty in this Assembly to use the principle of shared responsibility in solving our global problems, especially in offering solidarity and assistance to those States in need of outside support. We have all heard how the unrest in Somalia has spilled beyond its borders to manifest itself as piracy on the high seas. Seychelles is one of the States directly affected and heavily impacted by that scourge, as pirates prey on shipping and lay siege to the yachting, tourism and fishing industries of the Western Indian Ocean.

The long-term effects are much broader: as insurance premiums for shipping increase, the cost of transporting essential goods rises correspondingly. Also, we have often seen that economic desperation, coupled with long-term political instability, can lead to a breeding ground for terrorism.

Seychelles is pleased to note the increasing engagement of many States in the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean. We share the responsibility to ensure peace and stability in the region; as always, this is the prerequisite for progress. We must take action in three areas to effectively tackle the piracy situation. The root cause of the problem lies within Somalia. The long-term solution lies in establishing peace, stability, progress and the rule of law within Somalia. Through enhanced coordination and the sharing of information, we must ensure that piracy is not economically viable. We must share information to ensure that, by keeping vessels beyond their reach, we are always ahead of the pirates.

We must ensure that there is enough deterrence in terms of military assets in the region. Seychelles alone has an exclusive economic zone of 1.4 million square kilometres to patrol and protect, which we would not be able to do effectively without the help of friendly countries.

Nowhere is our shared responsibility more needed than in protecting and nurturing our shared environment. For the small island developing States (SIDS), the preservation of our environment is about our safety, our security, our economy and, ultimately, our survival. Thus, the battle against climate change is for a battle for our survival. Small island States and other particularly vulnerable nations, such as the least developed countries, cannot look at that issue in any other way.

The fight against climate change is a fight based on our undeniable human right to exist not only as nation States, but as peoples and communities. For example, the Arctic peoples and other indigenous peoples are also suffering from climate change first hand. Their voices, just like those of us in the SIDS and other particularly vulnerable States, need to be heard by the world' s leaders.

Nothing is more critical to our survival as States, as nations, as peoples and as communities than an urgent, coherent and effective response to the effects of climate change. But the response thus far has been sorely lacking. Weeks before Copenhagen, we are still unsure as to what type of an agreement we will get there. Furthermore, there are indications that if an agreement is made, it will not suffice to save many island States.

As the last small island developing State to speak in this general debate, Seychelles therefore feels it has a duty to remind the international community that in the coming weeks before Copenhagen, the Alliance of Small Island States will continue to steadfastly call for that which is necessary to our survival. That includes stabilizing long-term atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at well below 350 parts per million; ensuring that average global surface temperature increases be limited to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and requiring global greenhouse gas emissions to peak by 2015 and decline significantly thereafter. Furthermore, greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by more than 85 per cent by 2050. Annex I greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by at least 45 per cent by 2020 and by 2050, at least 95 per cent of 1990 carbon dioxide levels should be reduced. Non-Annex I emissions should also demonstrate significant deviations from baseline over comparable time periods.

Before concluding, Seychelles must salute the United Nations for the body of work it has contributed to advancing our understanding of how climate change is damaging our planet. Seychelles also thanks Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in ensuring that climate change, and especially the plight of the particularly vulnerable such as the small island developing States, get the attention they deserve.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has shown us that climate change is a disaster very much in the making. It is a disaster which, unlike previous global disasters, is not occurring in one sudden instant, but rather is gaining in pace and destructive power over time. It is also a disaster which is man-made, which is to say that it is our fault. As such, it is a disaster that we have a duty and a responsibility to prevent and that we can prevent.

We cannot afford to leave any nation behind in Copenhagen, no matter how poor, how weak or how small. Once again, this is our shared responsibility that we must assume.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kodjo Menan, chairman of the delegation of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to convey the warm greetings of the Head of State, Government and people of Togo on the occasion of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to add that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, who unfortunately is absent from New York, asked me to read out the following statement :

> "From this rostrum, where the leaders of the entire planet have expressed their views on the major questions of the time, I should in turn like to share with this Assembly the following ideas, prompted by the developments in our world over the past 12 months.
>
> "Before performing this duty, however, I wish to convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the Government and the people of Togo on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. I can assure you of my delegation's willingness to work with you to carry out your mandate, the success of which will do honour to Africa and in particular to your country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, with which Togo maintains friendly relations of solidarity and cooperation.
>
> "Also I wish to convey to your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, my congratulations on his work and in particular for the commendable initiatives he undertook throughout his mandate to restore the General Assembly to its due place and role under the United Nations Charter. To His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, I convey our

congratulations for the dynamic and pragmatic manner with which he has guided our Organization.

"I hereby forcefully reaffirm Togo's full adherence to the ideals of peace, security and development that are at the centre of the priorities of our Organization. My country also endorses the approaches adopted by our Organization in recent years to further sustainable development by promoting peace and security and by mobilizing international solidarity in the economic, social and cultural arenas.

"Political, administrative and economic governance remains essential to the consolidation of peace and security in our countries and undoubtedly helps to speed up achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, no harmonious and lasting development is possible without a climate of peace and national concord. That is why the Government of Togo spares no effort to create conditions conducive to bold reforms and to lay the foundations for a new republican pact and national reconciliation. Indeed, since 2005, the Government, under the guidance of the Head of State, has worked tirelessly for a policy of openness, the promotion of democracy, the strengthening of the rule of law and the reduction of poverty. A number of reforms have been undertaken in this regard, especially in the political, constitutional, institutional and socio-economic areas.

"Politically, the Head of State has engaged in dialogue as an instrument of political consensus. This approach, based on a politics of complete openness, culminated in the signing in August 2006 of the Global Political Accord, which in turn led to the formation of a Government of national unity, facilitated by His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso. I recall that the implementation of the Global Political Accord and the 22 commitments undertaken with the European Union led to the holding of free and democratic legislative elections in October 2007, which were welcomed unanimously by the international community. In the same spirit, a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission has been set up, the members of which were appointed on 29 May 2009. Its purpose is to shed light on the political acts of violence that occurred in Togo between 1958 and 2005 in order once and for all to banish impunity from our country and to reconcile the people of Togo with their history.

"With regard to constitutional reform, significant progress has been made. In August, the National Assembly adopted a law modifying the electoral code, relaxing the eligibility conditions for presidential elections, and allowing for the establishment of a national independent electoral commission and its reconfiguration in order to adapt it to current political realities. At the same time, discussions of certain questions continue with the firm resolve of the Government to carry out the rest of the reforms on the basis of consensus, since we have made concerted action and dialogue the foundation of our political action in Togo.

"In the institutional area, we have striven to reconstitute the Constitutional Court, the National Human Rights Commission and the High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication. Similarly, the Government of Togo has established a court of audits and adopted statutes for the army, the security forces and the opposition. It has also made arrangements for the public financing of political parties and the organs of the private press.

"As concerns the judiciary, our vast modernization programme of the judicial system continues in a satisfactory manner, with a view to involving the people more closely in the administration of justice. In this regard, the Government has taken measures to guarantee citizens freedom of expression, for example, by decriminalizing press offences. Furthermore, to demonstrate its desire to respect human dignity and defend human rights, our Government submitted to the National Assembly a bill abolishing the death penalty. This law, adopted unanimously on 24 June, is the outcome of a constitutional provision that requires the State to guarantee the physical and mental integrity, life and security of all persons living on our national territory.

"The efforts undertaken by the Government in the areas of health, education and employment, particularly for young people, have also seen

considerable progress. In the field of health, we have established a national health development plan for the years 2009 to 2013, at a cost of 317 billion CFA francs, reflecting the will of the Togolese Government to respond effectively to our people's health needs. With regard to education, Togo's educational system has suffered from the financial constraints afflicting the country for the past 15 years due to the suspension of cooperation. This situation, compounded by a high demand for education, has resulted in a decline in teaching conditions and serious structural problems. In the face of these constraints, the Government has committed to establish a sectoral education plan that will allow the country to launch a fast-track initiative in 2010 to ensure education for all.

"To put a new face on public administration and make it a genuine instrument for the reconstruction and modernization of our country, we have undertaken broad reforms that require, inter alia, the recruitment of new officials. Thus, thousands of young people have found work in the public and private sectors thanks to the creation of better production conditions for the economic and social development of the country.

"With regard to the economic sector, appropriate measures have been taken to put public finances on a sound footing, create a favourable framework for business and attract investment, particularly from abroad. In this context, I take this opportunity to once again make an urgent appeal to all our bilateral and multilateral partners, particularly the European Union and the Bretton Woods institutions, to help Togo in its efforts towards socio-economic recovery.

"In the opinion of my delegation, the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represent a growing threat to international peace and security, and thus a reason for us to give these questions the highest priority. In this regard, my country welcomed the Security Council summit held on 24 September, under the presidency of the United States, on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. While we reaffirm that multilateralism is the fundamental principle governing our consideration of disarmament and non-proliferation, Togo hopes that the Security Council summit will lead to a new approach to this crucial question. With regard to light arms, Togo reiterates its desire to see the current session of the Assembly commit to strengthening the implementation of the project aimed at negotiating a treaty on the traffic in light arms, as has been done by the Economic Community of West African States in this area.

"Concerning terrorism, an obstacle to peace and lasting development, my country feels that it has become imperative to improve and globalize the international legal framework in order to combat this scourge, which has assumed a new form in modern times. In this regard, the completion within a reasonable time frame of negotiations on a draft comprehensive convention against international terrorism would be salutary and in the interests of all.

"Similarly, the phenomenon of drugs, and in particular the illicit traffic in drugs along the west coast of Africa, has become a true danger and a destabilizing factor for the region. In light of the scale of this scourge, it is beyond a shadow of a doubt that no country can combat or hope to put an end to it alone. Togo therefore appeals for international cooperation, and in particular for assistance from the wealthy countries and competent organizations, in eradicating this phenomenon and thereby restoring the climate of security so essential to development. For its part, in spite of its scarce resources, Togo has undertaken a relentless struggle against drug traffickers and is cooperating with its neighbours in order to contain the scourge.

"As we all know, international peace and security continue to be threatened and the stability of certain countries disturbed by conflicts, terrorism and underdevelopment, all of which are largely man-made. Indeed, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic and Darfur, where crises continue, our Organization should continue to engage in a search for solutions that will allow those countries to recover the peace and security necessary to their development.

"In Somalia, despite the initiatives undertaken in April 2009 by the international community and by the African Union in July

2009 in support of security institutions and the African Union Mission in Somalia, the situation remains precarious and disturbing. That is why my country urgently appeals for other urgent measures to be taken to prevent that country from succumbing to chaos for good.

"Regarding Côte d'Ivoire, we note with satisfaction the positive evolution of the political situation in that country since the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. Consequently, we call on the stakeholders to display the political will to organize the presidential election.

"With regard to Guinea, it would seem appropriate and timely to encourage the political class to find, through dialogue and consultation, ways and means of ensuring a rapid return to constitutional order.

"As to the situation in the Niger, where the revision of the Constitution has provoked a crisis, my country hopes that the parties concerned in the Niger will strive to restore dialogue and consensus in order to maintain a climate of peace and harmony in that sister country.

"Outside the African continent, in the Middle East, a theatre of violence and desolation, an equitable and final settlement of the conflicts between the countries of this region should be found as soon as possible. To that end, the international community should encourage the various actors to find a peaceful solution to their conflicts. In this regard, my delegation reaffirms that the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires the creation of a Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders.

"Furthermore, my country deplores the continuing acts of terrorism that have afflicted the peoples of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and undermined the efforts of these countries to promote development. That is why we urge the international community to increase its assistance to the Governments of those countries in their fight against terrorism in order to promote peace and reconstruction.

"After two decades of economic stagnation resulting from policies of budgetary austerity imposed on developing countries, the latter are now facing new challenges from the food, financial, energy and environmental crises. In the light of this situation, it is imperative to work to mitigate the financial shock and to pursue bold policies to increase the agricultural and energy production capacities of the developing countries. At the same time, we need to consider overall structural reform of the world economic and financial system in order to prevent a resurgence of such crises.

"My country therefore welcomed the high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held from 24 to 26 June, which illustrated the need for international solidarity in the face of the crisis in order to ease the suffering of the peoples of developing countries.

"In that context, Togo welcomes the early implementation, in April 2009, of one of the pledges made at the G-20 meeting in London, concerning the establishment of the Global Trade Liquidity Programme amounting to $50 billion from 2009 to 2011, $15 billion of which are allocated to the African continent. Similarly, my country welcomes the initiative taken in March 2009 by the African Development Bank to create a special $500 million funding mechanism for African trade.

"Furthermore, my delegation is pleased that the United Nations, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, has taken the measure of the danger posed to humanity by the problem of climate change and the degradation of the environment. In this regard, the high-level meeting that took place a few days ago in this very body was an opportunity to analyse the situation and to clear the way for the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December. To paraphrase a great man, we have inherited the Earth and we should not destroy it. Living creatures come and go, but the Earth remains.

"In the face of the questions that my delegation has just raised, it is imperative to intensify partnerships of all kinds if we wish to prevent a situation in which, 64 years after its creation, our shared Organization should find itself still facing the same challenges. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Member States, in whose

interest it is that the United Nations should be more democratic, strong and effective, should determine to give it the resources necessary to permit it to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and thereby to meet the challenges that our world faces today."

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oumar Daou, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Mali.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, it is a pleasure for Mali to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and on your outstanding management of our work. The trust placed in you does honour to the whole of Africa and is a brilliant tribute to the great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and its leader, whose commitment to African unity and just causes is acknowledged by all. I assure you of our full support in your new responsibilities and congratulate your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua, on his excellent work throughout his mandate.

I also congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his strenuous efforts to strengthen the role of our Organization, and reaffirm our desire for his success in his assigned missions.

The current general debate is a timely opportunity for us to consider together the urgent problems facing the international community, to share our worries and concerns about the challenges that affect the world, and to find sustainable solutions pursuant to the heartfelt aspirations of our peoples.

While the financial and economic crisis that burst onto the scene last year has spared no country, it undoubtedly weakened the economies of the developing countries, especially in Africa, a continent that has long been marginalized. Fluctuations in food and oil prices have decreased revenues and exacerbated inflation in many developing countries.

The current multifaceted crises in the realms of finance, food, energy and the environment have plunged hundreds of millions of people into poverty and aggravated circumstances already straitened by unemployment and the high cost of access to basic services. The plight of the most vulnerable strata of society in developing countries, especially women and children, calls for action by the international community and should be at the heart of international concerns.

Even as this year we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, hundreds of millions of children still live at risk and in extreme poverty. More than 26,000 children under the age of five die each day in developing countries of diseases that for the most part could have been avoided if adequate resources had been mobilized and effective measures put in place to respond to immediate needs.

The breadth and complexity of the challenges that must be met cannot distract the international community from its responsibilities. It goes without saying that the resolution of the world financial and economic crisis requires a democratization of the international monetary system, notably the institution of a new international financial architecture based on the genuine participation of all nations, including developing countries. Only a global and cooperative effort will succeed in laying the groundwork for a lasting recovery. It is also essential to strengthen global development partnerships in order to create conditions favourable for the reduction of poverty, the improvement of health and education, gender equality and environmental protection, as set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In this regard, the Government of Mali has launched an innovative project to focus the MDGs on the 166 Malian municipal districts most vulnerable to food shortages. That initiative, inspired by the Millennium Village approach, is part of the economic and social development project instituted by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré. The project's principal aim is

> "to assure robust and sustainable growth that produces opportunities and prosperity for all citizens; to open the way to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015, thus allowing all Malians to enjoy the fundamental rights of all human beings to have enough to eat, to have access to potable water, to enjoy basic services within a radius of five kilometres and to send their children, both boys and girls, to primary school; and to create good working conditions for the majority of the country's young people".

As part of that initiative, the Forum on Initiative 166, organized by the Malian Government in the

margins of this session of the General Assembly, has increased awareness among development partners and donors alike of the need to support the efforts of the more than 2.5 million people living in nearly 3,000 villages in the 166 districts to raise themselves out of extreme poverty and launch their own social and economic development process.

Despite the progress made in developing countries with regard to the MDGs, the 2015 deadline looms on the horizon and much remains to do. We dare believe that the pledges made by the industrialized countries, notably at the Group of 20 summits held in Washington, D.C., London and Pittsburgh, will be honoured.

We also urge donor nations, international financial institutions and development organizations to give full attention to the special circumstances of the group of landlocked developing nations. Given their lack of access to oceans, their isolation and their removal from international markets, those countries face great difficulties in their endeavours to ensure their economic growth and social well-being and to participate in the global economy and international commerce. We remain convinced that pushing forward the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked countries will greatly contribute to the realization of the goals identified.

Climate change remains one of the greatest challenges of the day. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a summit devoted exclusively to climate change and environmental degradation. We believe that the international community must intensify its efforts to reach an international accord at the Conference in Copenhagen this December.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a prerequisite for all development. That is why Mali remains firmly devoted to the ideals of peace and stability both inside and outside its borders. In that spirit and at the initiative of the President of Mali, a regional conference will shortly be convened in Bamako on peace, security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan region. Our most ardent wish is to transform that area into a haven of peace, stability and prosperity.

Mali welcomes the progress made in Africa in restoring peace, stability and post-conflict reconciliation under the auspices of the African Union and the United Nations. We reaffirm our active solidarity with the peoples of the Middle East and will continue to support the relevant United Nations resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian question.

International terrorism is yet another serious threat to international peace and security. Mali therefore firmly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and applauds the General Assembly's adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), as promoted by our heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit.

Today more than ever, our nations must coordinate their efforts to overcome together the great challenges faced by humanity. The strengthening of international cooperation demands greater solidarity. That is in the interest of us all, because humanity needs to harness all of its potential if it is to achieve harmonious and sustainable development in an environment of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Charles Thembani Ntwaagae, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly and on the very effective manner in which you are presiding over its proceedings. I also pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann, for his leadership and commitment and for the very able manner in which he guided us throughout the past session. Under his leadership, a lot was achieved and we also weathered a number of turbulent storms.

The global economic environment has experienced many challenges since our last session. Never before has our common goal of advancing the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter for the betterment of all mankind been so tested. The challenges confronting humanity have since grown tenfold, both in scope and magnitude. The sheer enormity of these fast-evolving challenges threatens the very existence of the human race and the security of our planet.

I am convinced that these challenges are neither beyond our collective capability to address, nor are they insurmountable. Our moral imperative is to ensure

that the United Nations has the requisite resources, the tools and the capability to respond to the ever-changing environment in a timely, effective and decisive manner in order to help Member States address the many complex and multidimensional challenges.

It is important to remind ourselves of the decision we adopted at the World Summit in 2005 to

> "strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively ... the full range of challenges of our time". *(resolution 60/1, para. 146)*

In that respect, my delegation welcomes the progress made in implementing ongoing reforms of the United Nations with a view to streamlining rules, mandates and policies in order to promote transparency, coherence and efficiency in the system.

The global economic crisis that has besieged us has accentuated existing challenges and made them more complex. The crisis has been felt more seriously in developing countries. Human, financial and other resources are severely overstretched as countries seek creative and innovative ways to mitigate what has become the greatest economic threat of our time. The crisis therefore warrants a concerted effort involving both developed and developing countries. We should emerge from the crisis stronger and wiser, with new thinking about a new global financial architecture.

In the present circumstances, poverty levels in many economies appear to be spiraling out of control. Our poverty reduction strategies therefore need to be revised to face the new challenges. That goes for the commitments we signed on to at the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Sustainable Development and at the 2000 Millennium Summit. The new strategy should focus on raising the living standards of all people the world over. In dealing with those challenges, we should deploy all the resources of nature and technology to better life on the planet. But in doing so we should avoid any actions that could endanger the very lives that we want to uplift.

The devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic is among the myriad challenges to which we committed ourselves to tackle through international cooperation and assistance. HIV/AIDS undoubtedly continues to be one of the most daunting challenges of our time.

In June of last year, our leaders gathered in New York for the midterm review of the implementation of the goals and targets of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which was adopted in 2001. The review revealed that, despite heightened political momentum and national and global responses to HIV/AIDS, not much progress had been made towards mitigating its effects. Only a handful of countries were reported to be on track to achieving some of their commitments, while the majority of countries were found to be lagging far behind in implementing them. That situation underscores the urgent need to accelerate the momentum for universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.

The ongoing global economic crisis has already placed people living with HIV/AIDS at great risk, as many countries have had to cut down on some HIV/AIDS programmes due to budgetary constraints. Budget reductions in HIV/AIDS programmes, in particular, in developing countries, will obviously result in increased loss of life, as well as an increase in the cost of health care in the future.

We need to redouble our implementation efforts as we draw closer to the 2010 deadline for achieving the goal of ensuring universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. To that end, it is essential that as Governments we renew our commitment to put our people first when it comes to the kind of policies and programmes we formulate and implement.

The adverse impact of climate change and global warming is another problem that requires our urgent and sustained attention. Our collective response to the challenge of climate change and global warming necessitates pragmatism and decisive action. History will judge us harshly if we cannot muster the political will and commitment to put in place measures required to save planet Earth. The Copenhagen meeting scheduled for December of this year provides an opportunity to galvanize the efforts of the international community to address the challenges of climate change.

More important, the Copenhagen meeting will be a defining moment in the negotiations on the global commitments to be made with regard to the Kyoto Protocol after 2012. Botswana is strongly committed to those negotiations. We will do everything in our power to ensure their successful and timely conclusion. We

therefore call upon Member States to ensure that no effort is spared in giving the issues under negotiation the priority attention that they deserve.

Turning to international peace and security, my delegation is deeply concerned about the deterioration of the global security situation. We are convinced that the security of our world is dependent upon the entire membership of the United Nations working in unison.

The number and intensity of conflicts still raging in some parts of the world, in particular in Africa, is a cause for grave concern. It is sad that Africa appears — at least in my estimation — to have experienced more incidents of civil strife and violent confrontation than any other part of the world. In that regard, it is worth noting that the Security Council remains seized of conflict situations and developments in a number of African countries and regions, including Chad, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes region, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan, to name but a few.

Somalia remains the most dangerous place in the world, and a blemish on the conscience of the international community. Incidents of violence, kidnapping, banditry and piracy abound. Peacekeepers have also not been spared that barbarity. We commend Burundi and Uganda for the courage and heroism of their troops in support of the peace effort. International support and assistance is urgently required to deploy a stabilization force to strengthen the African Union Mission in Somalia and to support long-term peace and stability in that country.

With regard to the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, it is thanks to the collective efforts of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, as well as other international initiatives, that there are now prospects for positive developments. However, we should not underestimate the gravity of the challenges that continue to hamper the achievement of lasting peace, stability and sustainable development in that region and many more in Africa.

Apart from finding lasting solutions to conflicts, we should put in place measures to deal with post-conflict situations, as there is a danger that countries emerging from conflict could easily relapse into it. Regional bodies such as the African Union, as well as the United Nations, must stay focused on assisting countries to deal with both conflict and post-conflict situations.

We all know the causes of conflict and instability. They are the result of bad governance, mismanagement of national resources and the absence of democracy. In that respect, we cannot simply demand the full and active support of the international community in efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability. We must do more to consolidate the democratic process, respect for human rights and the rule of law. In that way, we would be more deserving and worthy of assistance.

Botswana is disturbed by the emerging trend of coups and of the unconstitutional transfer of power in Africa and in other parts of the world. We had thought that the era of military coups was now history. We unreservedly condemn the coups that took place in Mauritania, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Honduras. We would have been very disappointed if one such as Rajoelina, who masterminded the overthrow of a democratically elected Government in Madagascar, had been allowed to address this Assembly. We therefore applaud the decision taken by the General Assembly in that regard.

The Southern Africa Development Community correctly decided to suspend the regime in Madagascar from participating in the councils and structures of the subregional organization. Our continental organization, the African Union, has also maintained a principled position of automatically suspending any regime that comes into power by overthrowing the constitutional order. The international community must be united in its determination to isolate the regime in Antananarivo. We must not give it any comfort by embracing it in international forums.

We are also witnessing a disturbing development that undermines democracy and subverts the will of the people. There is a growing resort to changing constitutions in order to prolong the grip on power of leaders and political parties that have lost elections. In that regard, Africa, and indeed the world at large, must collectively and in one voice reject the extra-parliamentary transfer of power and isolate illegal regimes until constitutional order is restored. Embracing them in any small measure would be immoral and would perpetuate those hideous acts throughout the globe.

The world can be a better place for us and for future generations if we persistently nurture democratic practices, good governance and respect for the rule of law. As leaders, we should commit to building fraternity and greater mutual understanding among peoples across cultures and faiths. We have the responsibility to lead by example. We must desist from using inflammatory language that promotes tension and conflicts.

We cannot and must not condone leaders who, for their own selfish interests, change the constitutions of their countries in order to ensure their continued stay in power. At the same time, we should ensure that our elections are credible and that they reflect the sovereign will of the people. Governments should not be allowed to conduct elections and then tamper with the outcomes in order to suit their interests. People must be allowed to freely choose their leaders.

Botswana reiterates its position that it is fully committed to respecting the integrity and impartiality of the International Criminal Court so that it can freely carry out its judicial mandate. We equally support the principle of universal jurisdiction under international law and practice. However, we object to situations wherein its abuse becomes blatant.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the daunting challenges facing our world today, as stated previously, cannot and should not be tackled by any one country or by a group of countries alone. They require a strong multilateral approach that needs the commitment and unyielding support of the international community as a whole. Let us join hands together in an effort to address those complex challenges. Our timely, coordinated and effective action will go a long way in securing a better future for generations to come.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Archbishop Celestino Migliore, chairman of the delegation of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): As you, Sir, assume the presidency of the General Assembly at this sixty-fourth session, my delegation wishes you all the best in your endeavours and looks forward to working with you to address the many challenges facing the global community.

Every year, anticipation surrounds the General Assembly in the hope that Governments will be able to find points of agreement on the persisting problems that afflict humankind and to adopt a common direction for resolving them in a peaceful manner for the well-being of all. Understandably, the deliberations of the preceding session of the General Assembly were dominated by preoccupation with the world financial and economic crisis. It is only fitting that this year delegations have been asked to focus on the theme "Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development".

In view of a political and cultural dialogue oriented towards the harmonious evolving of the world economy and of international relations, we would do well to revisit the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, where it affirms that "We the peoples of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The various world crises that have intertwined in the past months bring to the discussion presuppositions of thought and principles of individual, social and international behaviour that extend well beyond the financial or economic fields. The idea of producing resources and assets — which is the economy — and strategically managing them — which is politics — without seeking together with the same actions to carry out also the good — which is ethics — has been proven to be a naive or cynical and fatal delusion. The more solid and profound contribution that the General Assembly must make to the solution of international problems lies in promoting the principles contained in the Preamble and in Article 1 of the Charter of this Organization in a manner that such high human and spiritual values serve to renovate the international order from within, where the real crisis lies.

A first element of truth is found precisely in the phrase "We the peoples of the United Nations". The theme of peace and development, in fact, coincides with that of the relational inclusion of all peoples in the unique community of the human family that is constructed in solidarity. Evident in the various Group of Eight, Group of 20, regional and international meetings, held in parallel with the work of the preceding General Assembly, was the necessity to give legitimacy to the political commitments assumed and to confront them with the thoughts and needs of the entire international community so that the solutions devised would reflect the points of view and the

expectations of the populations of all continents. That is why efficacious modes must be found to connect the decisions of the various groupings of countries to those of the United Nations, where every nation, with its political and economic weight, can legitimately explain itself in a situation of equality with others.

It is in that context of truth and sincerity that the recent appeal of Pope Benedict XVI can be seen in perspective. As he notes in his encyclical "Charity in Truth", in the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for an urgent reform of the United Nations, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. Such reform is urgent in order to find innovative ways of implementing the principles of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making.

Admittedly, building the United Nations as a true centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of those common ends is an extremely difficult task. The more the interdependence of peoples increases, the more the necessity of the United Nations becomes evident. The need to have an organization capable of responding to the obstacles and increasing complexity of the relations between peoples and nations thus becomes paramount.

As we consider the nature of development and the role of donor and recipient countries, we must always remember that true development necessarily involves an integral respect for human life, which cannot be disconnected from the development of peoples. Unfortunately, in some parts of the world today, development aid seems to be tied rather to the recipient countries' willingness to adopt programmes that discourage demographic growth by methods and practices disrespectful of human rights and dignity.

In that regard, it is both cynical and unfortunate that frequent attempts continue to be made to export such a mentality to developing countries, as if it were a form of cultural progress or advancement. Yet such a practice is by its nature not one of reciprocity but imposition, and to predicate the decision to give development aid on the acceptance of such policies constitutes an abuse of power.

Every human being has the right to good governance, that is, the right to participate in all social actions, at the national and international level, whether directly or indirectly, as a guarantee for all persons a free and dignified life. At the same time, it is an essential part of that dignity that everyone takes responsibility for his actions and actively respects the dignity of others.

Rights always exist inseparably from responsibilities and duties. This applies to individual men and women and, by analogy, to States, whose true progress and affirmation depends on their capacity to establish and maintain responsible relations with other States and to express a shared responsibility for world problems.

The implementation of the principle of the responsibility to protect, as formulated at the 2005 World Summit and approved by the unanimous consensus of all United Nations Member States, becomes a touchstone of the two enunciated principles of truth in international relations and of global governance.

The recognition of the core objective and indispensability of the dignity of every man and woman ensures that Governments always undertake with every means at their disposal to prevent and combat crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing and any other crimes against humanity. Thus, by recognizing their interconnected responsibility to protect States will realize the importance of accepting the collaboration of the international community as a means of fulfilling their role of providing responsible sovereignty.

The mechanisms of the United Nations for addressing common security and the prevention of conflicts were developed in response to the threat of total war and nuclear destruction in the second half of the last century, and for this reason alone they deserve perennial historical remembrance. Moreover, the work of peacekeepers have stabilized and ended innumerable local conflicts and have made related reconstruction possible.

Nevertheless, it is well known that the number of conflicts that the United Nations has not been able to resolve remains high and that many of them have become occasions of serious crimes against humanity. That is why the acceptance of the principle of the responsibility to protect and of the underlying truths that guide responsible sovereignty can be the catalyst for the reform of the mechanisms, procedures and representativeness of the Security Council.

In this context, my delegation would like to recall here the Honduran people, who continue to suffer frustration and hardship from the already too long political upheaval. Once more, the Holy See urges the parties concerned to make every effort to find a prompt solution in view of the good of the people of Honduras.

This session of the General Assembly began with the special Summit on Climate Change, and in December there will be the Copenhagen Climate Conference. The protection of the environment continues to be at the forefront of multilateral activities, because it involves, in consistent form, the destiny of all the nations and the future of every individual man and woman.

Recognition of the double truths of interdependence and personal dignity also requires that environmental issues are taken as a moral imperative and translated into legal rules, capable of protecting our planet and ensuring future generations a healthy and safe environment.

In closing, I would like to say that in these changing times the international community — "we, the peoples" — has the unique chance and responsibility to ensure full implementation of the United Nations Charter and thus greater peace and understanding among nations.

The President: We have two requests for the exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind Members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five for the second one.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): I am grateful for the opportunity to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply in connection to the statement made by the distinguished representative of Djibouti.

The Government of Djibouti has been engaged in a public campaign against Eritrea for quite some time. That has continued today in the statement made by the distinguished representative of Djibouti in his address to this Assembly.

When those allegations were initially made, Eritrea chose not to respond through a similar intensive diplomatic and media campaign, simply because Eritrea did not want to fall into the trap of escalating a crisis created by others as part and parcel of the misguided and destabilizing policies and acts found in the Horn of Africa.

It is strange to subject a Member State to condemnation on the basis of incomplete and one-sided information, and then request the United Nations Secretary-General to send a United Nations fact-finding mission.

It raises serious concerns when we see that it has become a common practice to embroil countries in endless crises, only in order to control regions by "managing these crises". What is unfortunate about that state of affairs is that they represent attempts to pressure and use the United Nations to exacerbate conflicts by the same actors who fomented it in the first place. There are numerous contemporary crises that illustrate this trend, among which is, of course, the "conflict" that is being instigated between Djibouti and Eritrea.

On 10 June 2008, Djibouti went, unfortunately, beyond diplomatic and media hate campaigns to launch an unprovoked attack on one of our units on the border. In spite of that unwanted and unnecessary development, it is important to note that through patience and restraint, Eritrea has been able to forestall and contain the transparent ploy.

Eritrea's desire remains the restoration and cultivation of good-neighbourly relations with Djibouti on the basis of each side's full respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other.

The way forward is for Djibouti to desist from allowing Mount Musa Ali to be occupied and used by troops hostile to Eritrea. Eritrea does not have any territorial ambition and has not occupied any land that belongs to Djibouti.

Miss Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing my delegation to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the delegation of Eritrea. The statement that the members of the Assembly just heard was an expression of denial and defiance towards the international community, as described earlier by our head of delegation, Mr. Roble Olhaye, in his statement to the Assembly this morning (see A/64/PV.12).

Without wishing to become involved in a sterile and futile discussion, my delegation simply wishes to refer to concrete facts that various regional and international organizations were able to observe during their fact-finding missions, carried out since the beginning of the crisis between my country and Eritrea.

The conclusions of the United Nations fact-finding mission — to mention just one — are unequivocal. Eritrea has rejected all mediation and cooperation initiatives aimed at resolving this crisis. In addition, the adoption on 14 January 2009 of Security Council resolution 1862 (2009), which very clearly condemned Eritrea's occupation of Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island and demanded that it withdraw its military forces to restore the status quo ante, acknowledge its border dispute with Djibouti, engage actively in dialogue to diplomatically resolve the conflict and abide by its obligations as a United Nations Member, shows that the members of the Security Council were fully aware of the scope of the problem and of the lack of cooperation on Eritrea's part.

Moreover, I wish to recall that Eritrea distinguishes itself in our region by the fact that, since its independence, it has been the source of numerous military aggressions towards several countries in the region, including Yemen, the Sudan and Ethiopia. The latest deadly provocation was the attack perpetrated against my country on 10 June 2008. Since then, we have spared no effort to resolve this crisis through dialogue, in vain.

There is a very simple fact that cannot escape even Eritrea: for dialogue, there must be two parties. The denial and distortion of facts cannot be an acceptable or conceivable response when one claims to be a responsible United Nations Member. My country has always been and remains convinced that States Members of the United Nations cannot take shortcuts regarding international law, nor can they be allowed to scorn it. Thus, it is high time that resolution 1862 (2009) be implemented.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): Let me take this opportunity to offer some clarifications.

Security Council resolution 1862 (2009) and the relevant presidential statements preceding it were adopted before the facts on the ground had been ascertained. As the conflict erupted, there was a desire at the highest level on the Eritrean side to address the matter quietly. That approach was accepted by Djibouti at the highest level, only to be later abandoned and internationalized for reasons that are best known to Djibouti.

Even now, Eritrea still wishes the restoration and cultivation of good-neighbourly relations with Djibouti on the basis of full mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and authority.

Miss Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor to respond to the statement just made by the representative of Eritrea.

As I just said in my previous statement, in no way do I wish to get the Assembly involved in an argument today. The facts speak for themselves. I should just like to recall that available United Nations documents prove what I just stated: that the United Nations fact-finding mission concluded that there was good cooperation on Djibouti's part and a lack of cooperation and total rejection of the Secretary-General's good offices on Eritrea's part.

Furthermore, I am very pleased to hear that the Eritrean delegation is speaking of calm and good-neighbourly relations. I think that perhaps that is the beginning of a change in position, which is desirable. That is why I should like the Members of the General Assembly to refer to the report of the fact-finding mission (S/2008/602), which is an official United Nations document.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

As we are now approaching the conclusion of the general debate, I should like to make a brief statement.

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The general debate of the General Assembly has now concluded. On behalf of the Assembly, I thank all speakers for their statements. I have listened carefully to their views and suggestions. The breadth and depth of their vision, as well as the passion of their convictions, are genuine testimony to the importance of this universal body.

I had suggested, at the beginning of the session, that we reflect on "Effective responses to global crises — strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development" as the main theme for this debate. I welcome the fact that that topic has served as a catalyst for important policy discussion. Throughout our debate, we have heard a clear call for dialogue and have seen a willingness to work side by side.

It is obvious that the greatest challenges facing us today span the entire globe and cannot be resolved by a

single country, small group or region. Our increasing interdependence calls for concerted and united responses to those challenges based on common understanding, close international cooperation and shared responsibilities. I welcome a new era of engagement based on mutual interests, mutual respect and a more just and democratic world order in which sovereign Member States participate on an equal footing.

The vision of nations uniting to face common challenges lies at the heart of the United Nations. I am encouraged by the fact that, both inside and outside this Hall and at various meetings and events held on the sidelines of this debate, we have seen a renewed commitment to the promotion of effective and inclusive multilateralism.

I shall work with all Member States to advance that objective. In that context, we must ensure full participation and ownership on the part of everyone and, in particular, take into account the interests of the developing world, which comprises the vast majority of small- and medium-sized States.

There were also clear calls to promote greater coherence and understanding among regional and political groupings as well as dialogue among faiths, cultures and civilizations. I believe that we need to adopt this path in order to fully tap the opportunities that present themselves to address the global challenges collectively and more effectively. The General Assembly is uniquely placed to synergize our efforts in that regard and to forge collective strategies for the common good.

There is a widely shared concern about the impact of climate change on our planet and our present and future generations. We have heard powerful testimony from small island States, whose very survival is threatened. But no country will be spared the impact of climate change. Climate change is a growing global threat which will have consequences for the global economy, health and safety, food production, peace and security and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The poorest nations, which often contribute the least to the phenomenon, are the most vulnerable to climate change.

There is a readiness by Member States to agree on a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and to make the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen a success. We must now maintain this momentum.

I have heard calls for more collective action to prevent conflicts and settle disputes that threaten international peace and security. In some areas we have taken small but concrete steps towards sustainable political solutions, as in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia and Timor-Leste, but much more needs to be done, particularly in Africa, including in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have also noted members' concerns about unresolved conflicts that require our urgent attention.

Of utmost concern to the international community is the situation in the Middle East, particularly the long-standing issue of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The situation is unsustainable, particularly the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. I am encouraged by the efforts of the President of the United States to promote a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Middle East. This entails full backing of the international community and a more effective role of the United Nations.

The United Nations has unique legitimacy to play an active role in international peace and security. There has been broad support for the United Nations role in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, mediation and protection of civilians.

Disarmament remains a clear priority for Member States. There is also widely shared concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as a threat to international peace and security. We have heard passionate and progressive calls for a world free of nuclear arms. I am encouraged by the willingness of Member States to engage constructively with respect to the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Let us all work together to ensure equal security for all.

Member States were unanimous in their view that peace and security was intricately linked to sustainable development. There is broad agreement on the need for a collective response to the unprecedented global financial crisis. People in developing countries have been hit particularly hard by the financial and economic crisis, which has exacerbated unemployment, poverty, hunger and insecurity. I have noted the suggestions for strengthening the international economic system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, with a view to making them more

inclusive, transparent and democratic in their decision-making.

We will continue the follow-up to the high-level Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development. We must not allow the Millennium Development Goals to become the prime victim of the financial crisis. As was rightly noted, at the current rate it will take more than 100 years to achieve the MDGs. Drastic measures are therefore needed. Next year, the tenth anniversary of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) will provide us with the opportunity to reinvigorate the global partnership to make the MDG's a reality. I look forward to the cooperation and support of all for the success of the September 2010 high-level event.

Some five years after 2005 World Summit, our joint endeavour to reform the United Nations continues energetically. I have heard urgent calls for reforming the Security Council comprehensively, making it more representative, democratic and open and, hence, more legitimate. Many members have also emphasized the need to begin the review of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and to continue the process of revitalizing the General Assembly. We shall pursue all these objectives together.

Through multilateralism and dialogue, we can collectively achieve all these goals. We will need to work efficiently, with civility, discipline and a readiness to compromise for the greater good. I want to assure all present that I intend to conduct this work with transparency, fairness and respect for the General Assembly's central and crucial role in the United Nations.

I look forward to working with all members in this spirit as we face our common challenges.

(*spoke in English*)

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

Organization of work

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/64/3, which has been distributed desk to desk. It contains the programme of work of the Assembly and the schedule of plenary meetings for the period from October to December 2009. I would also like to inform Members that the lists of speakers for items listed in document A/INF/64/3 are now open.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.